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ABSTRACT

This publication reports on a study exploring how prospective English teachers view literature and how they think literature is taught and learned. The study is based on an extensive interview protocol, the "Understanding Literature for Teaching Interview." The protocol consists principally of a series of tasks, such as developing sample lessons and tests, designed to elicit the students views' on literature (including evaluation of various texts as literature, discussion of a literary text or author, text analysis, and critical theory) and views on teaching (teaching text analysis and critical theory, text selection, assessing pupil knowledge and understanding, and teaching strategies and scenarios). In carrying out these tasks, prospective teachers draw on their knowledge and understanding of literature and of the teaching of literature. As well as being useful for collecting data on prospective teachers' knowledge and understandings, the tasks have pedagogical value, requiring students to confront fundamental issues about the nature of literary study, the nature of knowing in literature, and the teaching of literature. The appendix, approximately two-thirds of the report, includes the full text of the interview protocol itself. (Contains 36 references.) (ND)

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Abstract

How do prospective English teachers view literature and how do they think literature is taught and learned? These questions underlie the extensive interview protocol developed by researchers at the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning to investigate the knowledge and understanding of English majors preparing to teach in secondary schools. The author describes the design of the study and the interview protocol—the Understanding Literature for Teaching Interview. The protocol consists principally of a series of tasks. In carrying out these task, prospective teachers draw on their knowledge and understandings of literature and the teaching of literature. In addition to presenting the rationales behind these tasks, the author includes the full text of the interview protocol itself. As well as being useful for collecting data on prospective teachers' knowledge and understandings, the tasks have pedagogical value. They require students to confront fundamental issues—about the nature of literary study, the nature of knowing in literature, and the teaching of literature.

Studying Prospective Teachers' Views of Literature and Teaching Literature

G. Williamson McDiarmid

Introduction

Recently, reformers have called for a new kind of learning in schools. Intellectual flexibility, critical judgment, and the capacity to work collaboratively have come to predominate, in the eyes of some reformers, over the acquisition of a particular body of knowledge as the desired cognitive outcomes of schooling (see, for example, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989; Holmes Group, 1990; National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, 1989; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989). These calls for reform are not without critics: Reforms that appear to relegate the accrual of information to a secondary position alarm those who fear that what they call "the common culture" is dissolving under the onslaught of multiculturalism, cultural relativism, and the abandonment of standards (Bennett, 1984; Bloom, 1987; Hirsch, 1987; Schlessinger, 1992).

Despite such criticism, those in the English community have issued a similar call for reform. The English Coalition Conference (Lloyd-Jones & Lunsford, 1989), which includes the major organizations in the United States concerned with the teaching of English, recently described the person they "would like to see emerge from the secondary classrooms" as able to:

> use language effectively to create knowledge, meaning, and community in their lives . . . reflect on and evaluate their own language use . . . recognize and evaluate the ways in which others use language to affect them. (p. 19)

These calls for reform raise a question about whether teachers are being prepared to help *all* students learn as the reformers envision. Although some reformers—the Holmes Group, for instance—acknowledge the problem, most reformers seem to underestimate the difficulty of changing teacher knowledge and understanding as a requisite for changing students' understanding and knowledge. And the reason isn't necessarily, as Kramer (1991) and others would have us believe, that preservice teacher education courses are intellectually flaccid. One needn't be an apologist for teacher education to point out that arts and science faculty, not teacher educators, are primarily responsible for the subject matter preparation of preservice teachers. If the subject matter understanding of teachers is insufficient to the task of the 'new learning,' arts and science faculty are at least as responsible as teacher educators.

Considerable evidence suggests that many teachers do not develop connected and meaningful understandings of the subjects they study as undergraduates. Analysis of data from the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach (TELT) study, conducted by the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning between 1986 and 1991, revealed that teachers often lack the kind of subject matter knowledge—at least in mathematics and writing—they need to help students develop connected, meaningful understandings. Although we expected to find that elementary teachers would frequently lack genuine understanding of fundamental ideas in mathematics—given that few mathematics departments offer courses in topics such as number theory which these teachers are responsible for teaching—we

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didn't anticipate the apparent inability of secondary math teachers who had majored in the subject to represent correctly fundamental ideas such as division (Ball, 1990a, 1990c; Ball & Wilson, 1990; McDiarmid & Wilson, 1991; NCRTE, 1991).

Evidence on the learning of specific subject matter calls into question the assumption that attending arts and science courses can be taken as a proxy for learning critical subject matter knowledge. Much of this evidence comes from investigations of the understandings undergraduates develop in mathematics and science (Arons, 1990; Clement, 1982; Clement, Lochhead, & Monk, 1981; Maestre, Gerace, & Lochhead, 1983; Maestre & Lochhead, 1983; McDermott, 1984; Schoenfeld, 1985). Students, including majors, can often succeed in the terms of the institution—receive good grades, pass exams, and so on—and yet continue to hold ideas and beliefs that are incomplete, inaccurate, or plain wrong in the eyes of those in the field and questionable as a basis for teaching. Students' understandings in other fields—such as literature and history—have been less well studied. McDiarmid recently studied the learning of undergraduates, half of whom were prospective teachers, in a historiography seminar designed to confront students' beliefs about the nature of history and historical knowledge (McDiarmid, in press; McDiarmid & Vinten-Johansen, 1993). He found that although the students engaged in "doing history" and found the experience powerful, their understanding changed only incrementally. He concludes that such results attest less to the ineffectiveness of the course than to the sheer difficulty of coming to understand knowledge differently.

But what is the relationship between teachers' knowledge and understandings of subject matters and what they actually do in their classrooms? After all, as critics have pointed out, the belief that teachers' knowledge of their subject matter is related to student learning is little more than an assumption yet to be established by research. Yet, the idea is compelling. Teachers' beliefs about the nature of the subject matter (what is considered knowledge in the field?), the range of perspectives on that subject matter (how is knowledge viewed and organized?), and the development and assessment of knowledge in the discipline (how is knowledge created and tested?) appear to be directly related to how they think about teaching and learning the subject matter. These beliefs are further related, therefore, to the kinds of opportunities to learn that they are inclined and capable of orchestrating (see, for instance, Ball, 1990b; Holt, 1990; McDiarmid, in press; McDiarmid & Vinten-Johansen, 1993; Wilson, in press; Wineberg & Wilson, 1990). If, for instance, teachers believe that the primary reason for having students read *Hamlet* or *The Color Purple* is to be conversant with the characters and plot as well as with the lives of the authors, they are likely to believe their job is to see to it that students glean and retain this information. Learning, in this case, would mean primarily identifying and retaining what the teacher believes to be important information about the text and the authors.

If, however, teachers believe that the primary reason for having students read *Hamlet* or *The Color Purple* is to learn something about themselves and the society in which they live, they are likely to see their job as helping students figure out how they are like and different from the characters, how the circumstances of the characters shape their beliefs and actions, and how, similarly, the circumstances in which the students live may be shaping their beliefs and actions. Learning, in this case, would mean developing a capacity for understanding human motivation—both one's own and that of others—and the role that social, cultural, and political circumstances play.

If teachers believe that the reason students should read these texts is because the authors are consummate artists, evoking through their language and literary creations deep emotions—fear, hatred, joy, shame, confusion, hope, desperation—they may see their job as helping students learn to appreciate the nuances and aesthetics of well-crafted literary texts. If they believe students should read these texts because they reveal how writers—as products of particular social, political, and cultural configurations—manifest relations of power and authority—between men and women, social classes, races—they are likely to view their job as pointing out how the texts signify such relations.

Teachers could and do, of course, hold and act upon a variety of other perspectives on literature and why we bother to teach it. And some teachers are eclectic in their approach, adopting different perspectives for different purposes. The point is that teachers' beliefs about the nature of literature, about

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the role and purpose of reading literary texts, about the relation of the reader to the text inform their thinking about what they should teach, their role, students' roles, and what needs to be learned and how. Yet, we know relatively little about the development of their thinking or the role that various experiences—within their families, in school, with friends, in college—play in their thinking. We also know little about the relationship between their thinking about literature and studying literature and their thinking about teaching students who are socially, racially, or culturally different from themselves.

Teacher educators and English faculty are faced with designing experiences that will help prospective teachers develop understandings of literature as well as of teaching and learning literature that promote the "new learning" for *all* students. To support this endeavor, those of us studying the learning of prospective English teachers at the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning (NCRTL) are addressing several questions: What kinds of understanding of literature and teaching and learning literature do prospective teachers develop while they are taking their subject matter courses? What do they believe is literature? What do they believe it means to know literature? How do they think about literary texts? How do they think literature is taught and learned? How do they reason about the central tasks of teachers—designing and orchestrating instruction for and assessing the learning of diverse students? What do they think students should learn? How do they think students learn this? What role do they think teachers play in pupils' encounters with texts? Do they think all students should learn the same things? Read the same texts?

Addressing these questions is one of the central goals of the Understanding Literature for Teaching study of the NCRTL. In this paper, I describe the conceptual framework for the study, our approach to data collection, some preliminary musings on the data we have collected so far, and the kinds of problems we are encountering. I hope that the paper spurs interest in the work and helps connect us to those doing similar work.

The Understanding Literature for Teaching Study: Methods

Rather than discussing our conceptions of prospective teachers' knowledge separately, I have chosen to describe our ideas about learning and knowledge in the context of describing the data collection methods. This is in part because the construction of the research design embodies our conjectures about prospective teachers' thinking and learning. For instance, we have chosen to ask about their understandings of literature separately from their understandings of teaching and learning literature. We have done this because we want to explore the relationship between their thinking in these two different contexts. Asking about the two contexts together makes the task of gauging the role that pedagogical considerations play in how prospective teachers' think about literature all the more difficult. The specifics of the interview provide specific referents for our conceptions of prospective teachers' knowledge and understandings.

Research Design

We have designed the study to help learn more about (1) how prospective teachers think about literature—what it is, what it means to know it, its role in their lives, how it is best taught and learned, and how they think about teaching and learning literature in relation to students from different social and cultural groups; (2) how their thinking about these issues changes while they are taking English courses; and (3) the role that English courses play in their developing ideas and understandings.[1] Several features characterize the design:

The design is *longitudinal* so that we can follow the development of prospective teachers' ideas over time (Table 1). In part, this grows out of our interest in learning and assumes that learning occurs over time, particularly the development of broad, organizing concepts such as "literature" and "theory." The design focuses on the *process* of prospective teachers' thinking rather than on a more static sense of knowledge—such as their ability to recall particular information. This is because we want to learn more about how prospective teachers think and how their thinking changes; how they make sense of their experiences with texts, ideas, concepts, theories, with courses and faculty, with other people and events in their environment that may influence their understanding of literary texts; and how they treat

Table 1 Research Design: Understanding Literature for Teaching				
	Fall 1992	**Spring 1993**	**Fall 1993**	**Spring 1994**
Data Collection: Students	ULT interviews	Course-specific interviews	Course-specific interviews	ULT interviews
Data Organization	• Transcription of interviews • Create database	• Transcription of interviews • Begin entering data in database	• Transcription of interviews • Entering data in database	• Transcription of interviews • Entering data in database
Data Analysis		• Analysis of pilot data	• Analysis of baseline ULT interview data	• Analysis of course-specific interview data • Analysis of baseline ULT interview data
Consulting with English Faculty	Initiate conversations with English faculty about design & purpose of study & their involvement			Discuss data and preliminary analyses with faculty

new experiences and how these influence their understandings. Our interest in the process of thinking has led us to devise tasks for prospective teachers in which we, in a sense, can follow the unfolding of reasoning. Consequently, few of the questions we ask are of the direct type, "Tell me your theory of literature." When we do ask such questions, we do so in part to be able to compare what prospective teachers say in response to such queries with what we learn from their responses to the tasks.

The tasks we have devised provide a *context*—for instance, we set the teaching and learning tasks in hypothetical schools that represent different demographic and ethnic situations. The contexts provide specifics to which prospective teachers respond. These specifics increase the chances that prospective teachers will understand the intent of the question and provide shared referents for the interviewer and the students. Being adept at "schooling," prospective teachers could, of course, come up with an answer to a question such as "What is literature?" The abstractness of the question invites an abstract response. By posing the question in the context of specific texts, we can identify the features of works to which prospective teachers attend and trace the elaboration of these features in their thinking.

In addition to the extensive, task-focused interviews, we are interviewing students about their experiences in each of their English courses and English methods courses. We investigate their impressions of both the content and pedagogy of the course. We also ask them to discuss the texts they read, allowing them to talk of these in any way they choose. The purpose of these interviews is to track any changes in their thinking and ideas and the contributions that formal courses may have made to such changes.

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Another aspect of the design is to collect some independent data on the courses that prospective teachers take. We originally planned to observe several meetings of the required course that prospective teachers in our sample take and to interview instructors of these courses about their purposes, curriculum design, and views on some of the central issues in their field. This has proved to be the most problematic aspect of the design. English faculty, overburden as many faculty are with teaching assignment, have little time to be interviewed. Some were also seem uncomfortable with the presence of outsiders in their classrooms. Already uneasy, relations were further strained by the uncertainties and misgivings that attended the Teacher Education Department's moving abruptly to a five-year program and attempting to control all methods courses. In addition to being NCRTL researchers, we are also faculty and instructors in the Teacher Education Department.

We consulted with English faculty about our design before we began collecting data on prospective teachers. Such cooperation seems vital if the study is to have any benefits for prospective teachers. The conventional wisdom that teachers should not know what researchers are finding out about their students seems a bit silly here, although, of course, protecting participants' anonymity is essential. Our goal is to provide support to English instructors, not evaluate their effectiveness.

Pilot Study

Our task-based interview—the Understanding Literature for Teaching Interview (ULTI)—was revised numerous times as we conducted pilot interviews. During the pilot phase, we conducted parts of the interview with 30 undergraduates, 27 of whom were prospective teachers. The pilot study also afforded us the chance to collect data on 5 prospective elementary teachers who we had not originally intended to include but were urged on us by colleagues who thought data on them would be both valuable in their own right and might provide a useful comparison for the prospective English teachers.

The pilot sample was one of convenience; we identified juniors and seniors in one of the alternative teacher education programs at a large state research university in the midwest. We contacted some of these prospective teachers and asked them to participate. We paid participants $25 per interview. Although it is a sample of convenience. we have no reason to believe that the prospective teachers in the pilot sample—like those in the current study—are unrepresentative of the majority of secondary English teacher-candidates entering the profession: Most are white, middle-class females from rural areas, small towns, and suburbs. The pilot sample also included seven males and two African-American females.

Sample

In the fall of 1992, we selected a sample of 16 prospective teachers from the same population of prospective teachers that supplied our pilot sample. These 16 were selected from all four sections of the introductory English course taken by all English majors at the same large state research university in the mid-West at which we did the pilot study. To select the sample, we asked the instructors of the required course to distribute survey forms to all students who identified themselves as teacher candidates. We chose self-identification over using a list from the registrar's office because of the unreliability of the later. Second- and even third-year students seem to change their career plans frequently, particularly during the three-month summer vacation. Selecting 16 allowed us to be reasonably sure that we would still have 12 students in the sample 3 semesters later. Eight of the students were in their second year of university studies and eight were in their third year.

Subsequently, two students have dropped out of the study. Both left the university. One enrolled at a regional state university close to his home.

In selecting focal students from the self-described prospective teachers in the required introductory English course, we applied several criteria. We wanted to include, if possible, prospective teachers from groups underrepresented in English departments: people of color and males. We wanted to be able to compare their experiences and understandings with those of white females who traditionally have constituted the majority of those who become English teachers. We also wanted prospective teachers who had taken as few prior English literature courses as possible, who were as close as possible to the beginning of their programs. This was particularly important for the second year students who were the first to be admitted to the redesigned English program.

This attempt to redesign a program to achieve greater coherence was what had attracted us to this program in the first place. Because we knew that, as Graff (1992) has most recently argued, students experience their undergraduate program as a series of unrelated encounters with bodies of information and ideas and that this fragmentation legislates against students developing an integrated understanding of the field, we looked for a program consciously designed to counteract this tendency.

As we did for the pilot, we paid students $25 per semester for their participation in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

The primary data collection instrument is the Understanding Literature for Teaching (ULTI) interview. We designed the interview to be conducted in three different sessions of two hours each. Each part of the interview focused on a different aspect of prospective teachers' knowledge. In the first part, we probed extensively students' background. Part two was focused on their understandings of what literature is. In part three, we elicited their understandings of teaching and learning literature. The full text of the ULT Interview is included in the Appendix.

The ULTI, Part I: Background

In part one, we explored students' prior experiences with reading, literature, and writing. These experiences—in family and communities, in school, in college, with various media and other cultural phenomena—shape, we believe, their relationship to literary texts. In this part, we did ask prospective teachers directly about their experiences, including a series of questions on each of the English courses they have taken from elementary school through college. This is one of the ways we used to find out more about the learning opportunities they have encountered.

The ULTI, Part II: Views of Literature

The classification task. In part two, we engaged them in a series of tasks designed to elicit how they think about literary texts and "literature" as a category, criticism, and what "knowing literature" means. In the first task, we asked the students to examine a stack of texts we set on the table in front of them(table 2). We asked them to look at each of the texts in turn, to tell of us whether they consider it "literature," and to explain their judgment. The purpose of the task was not to find out whether their beliefs accord with one or another conception of "literature." Rather, we were interested in *how* they think about the texts: the features of the work they take into account in evaluating the texts, the various conceptions of literature to which they refer, the criteria they develop for literature and how they modify these criteria as they assess each of the texts. This task was also essential because the term "literature" occurs throughout the interview; we needed to understand what the term evokes in the prospective teachers' minds to be able to interpret what they say later.

We selected texts that we thought students were most likely to find familiar and that also represent a wide range: Texts that were clearly fictional and conventionally regarded as "literature"; fictional texts not regarded as serious literature in the academy; a non-fiction text widely regarded as "scientific"; a non-fiction text that employs many of the conventions of fictional writing; a high school history textbook; various magazines, one of which includes fictional as well as informational and investigative writing, one that is informational and targets a particular ethnic group, and one that provides information on celebrities; a newspaper many consider to be the "newspaper of record" and the local university newspaper; a popular cartoon strip; an advertisement from a glossy magazine; a fabricated memo from the sales manager of a candy company; the lyrics of a rap song; and two poems—one a well-known haiku and the other a frequently anthologized poem by a modern American poet.

In the exit interviews, we also included the text of a religious missive, a children's book consisting solely of pictures, and the instructions for a coffee maker. The first we included because the Bible and other sacred writings arose in several of the baseline interviews and we wanted to investigate students' views of such texts more systematically. The second and third we included because several students seemed to have reached very Derrida-like positions that everything was text. We wanted to challenge their positions to learn more about their rationales.

Discussion of self-selected text or author. To discover more about their thinking about literary texts, about the features of texts they consider most critical, we asked the students to discuss a literary text or author that they found particularly

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Table 2

Texts for the Classification Task

•*The Complete Works of Shakespeare*	•*People*
•*The Origin of Species*	•*New York Times*
•*Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*	• College newspaper
•*Native Son*	• Calvin & Hobbes cartoon
• Stephen King novel	• Color magazine advertisement
• Romance/fantasy novel	• Business memo
• High school history textbook	• "Total Control" (the rap group, "Guy")
•*New Yorker*	• "In A Station of the Metro" (E. Pound)
•*Ebony*	•"Death of the Ball Turret Gunner" (R. Jarrell)
Exit interview only	
• Catholic pastoral missive	• Children's picture book (no words)
• Instructions for coffee maker	

meaningful. We were particularly interested in the rationale they provided for the text or author they chose to discuss. This task also provided information on prospective teachers as readers—the appeal that literature holds for them, the role reading plays in their lives.

Text analysis task. Next, we asked them to read a literary text and, then, analyze the text. We chose "The Raven" by Edgar Allen Poe for this task for several reasons. We wanted a text with which prospective teachers were likely to be familiar. Even if they hadn't read it, we reasoned, at least they would have heard of it and its author. Secondly, we thought a narrative text would be more accessible to students than other, less familiar forms. We needed a narrative text that was short enough, however, to be read during the course of an interview. Because we wanted to ask questions about the text in the context of teaching it as well as questions about it *qua* text, we also wanted a text that is commonly taught in high school. Applebee (1991), drawing on survey data collected from a representative sample of public and private secondary school literature programs, identifies Poe as the fourth most frequently appearing author in the seven most popular anthology series. "The Raven" appeared in all seven series—in six of the seventh grade, two of the eighth grade, and three of the seventh grade anthologies (Applebee, 1991). Finally, we wanted a text about which critics have written and about which they sharply disagree, indicating that the text lends itself to a variety of readings and that the text is of sufficient significance to warrant, at a minimum, the explicit contempt of some critics.

In addition to reading and discussing "The Raven," prospective teachers also read a brief biography of Poe. We asked them how this information influenced their understanding of the poem. Again, rather than seeking a "correct" answer, we wanted to learn more about how these students reasoned: What did they think is the relationship between an author's life and his or her work? How did contextual information influence their reading of a text?

Critical theory task. In another major task, prospective teachers read one-page descriptions of four different theories of literature. We wrote these descriptions to represent, however reductively and roughly, four competing views of approaching literary texts: New Criticism, reader-response, traditional humanism, and

deconstructionism. We are aware that, within each of these theories, proponents disagree among themselves at least as much as they do with advocates of competing theories and that a single, formulaic description misrepresents the nuances and complexities of the extended conversations that have gone on around each of these theories. The descriptions are, however, merely foils: We are less interested in students' knowledge of these theories than in their own theories. For we assume that they are, in fact, developing their own theories of literature, however tacitly. In critiquing each of these reductive descriptions and comparing them, the students described how their beliefs—about the text, the reader, the critic, the social context—compared to those we presented them.

This part of the interview finishes with a series of questions about the prospective teachers' beliefs about the purpose of literary study, their motives for reading, the kinds of reading and writing they do, and, leading into the third part of the interview, their beliefs about why we teach literature in school.

The ULTI, Part III: Views of Teaching Literature

In part three, the tasks from part two are set in the context of teaching. By asking about teaching in the context of tasks they have previously discussed, we were able to examine how their thinking about *teaching* a particular text or literary theory or idea is related to their thinking about the same text or theory or idea outside of a teaching context. Earlier studies of teachers' knowledge led us to believe that prospective teachers think differently about an idea or issue in the context of the subject matter than they do in the context of teaching the subject matter (McDiarmid, in press).

At the same time, we do not assume that prospective teachers could or would do what they told us in response to our questions. But by describing what they were inclined to do, they disclosed their beliefs and knowledge about the purposes for teaching literary texts, the pedagogical potential of various texts, the roles and responsibilities of the teacher, the roles and capabilities of learners, and the process of communicating one's understandings of a text. In short, we learned more about how this sample of prospective teachers reason pedagogically.

Teaching pupils to analyze a text. About "The Raven," we asked, if they were to teach the poem, on what they would focus instruction, what we would see if we were in the classroom when they were teaching, what role information on Poe's life might play, what other contextual information, if any, they might want pupils to know, how they would find out if their pupils were learning what they wanted them to learn, and what kinds of writing they might assign in connection with the poem.

Teaching critical theory. About the literary theories, we asked them what they believed to be the place of literary theories in teaching high school English. We asked whether they would teach these different perspectives on literature, about the reasons for their answer, and if they were asked to teach them, how they would go about it.

Text selection task. Next we presented them a list of texts commonly taught in eleventh grade English classes and asked them to select six texts that they might use. We then asked them to explain their choices. We constructed the list based on the result of Applebee's survey of high school English teachers (Applebee, 1989). We chose the most frequently taught book-length texts in three categories: the traditional canon, the school canon, and contemporary alternatives to the traditional canon (see table 3). While again we were interested in the thinking that lies behind prospective teachers' choices—the features of the text to which they attend, the relative importance in their thinking of various features, the criteria they develop in choosing one text over another and the relative weight of these—we also wanted to learn more about their views of the canon.

Contrary to the laments of cultural Cassandras—such as Bloom, Hirsch, Bennett, and others—over what they believe is the neglect of the Western literary canon, the data Applebee (1990, 1991) has amassed on high school English courses and those gathered by Franklin, Huber, and Laurence (1992) on upper-division college English courses appear to show that, as Graff (1992) argues, the canon has changed "by accretion at the margins, not by dumping classics" (p. 24). We

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Table 3

TRADITIONAL CANON	YOUTH CANON	ALTERNATIVE CANON
The Red Badge of Courage	**Forever**	**I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings**
The Great Gatsby	**The Miracle Worker**	**The Fire Next Time**
The Scarlet Letter	**The Lord of the Flies**	**Soul on Ice**
The Old Man and the Sea	**A Separate Peace**	**Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass**
The Crucible	**To Kill a Mockingbird**	**The Invisible Man**
The Death of a Salesman	**Call of the Wild**	**A Raisin in the Sun**
The Chosen	**The Catcher in the Rye**	**Their Eyes Were Watching God**
Hamlet	**Our Town**	**Woman Warrior**
Macbeth		**Autobiography of Malcolm X**
Grapes of Wrath		**The Song of Solomon**
Of Mice and Men		**The Color Purple**
Huckleberry Finn		**Black Boy**
Ethane Frome		**Native Son**
Glass Menagerie		

wondered about the teachers of tomorrow: Were they likely to confirm the worst fears of the defenders of the canon, dropping *Hamlet* for *The Color Purple*?

Text selection for different school contexts. We also wanted to learn more about how different school contexts would influence prospective teachers' thinking about which texts they should teach. Students seemed to be receiving two distinct and even contradictory messages about teaching pupils culturally different from themselves. On the one hand, they were exhorted to hold high expectations for all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds. One interpretation of this injunction is that they should teach all pupils, especially those historically denied equitable access to "empowering" knowledge, the texts, information, ideas, and skills that will afford them entry to the "culture of power" (Delpit, 1988). This could be taken as an argument for teaching the traditional canon and some—such as Marva Collins (Collins & Tamarkin, 1990)—make exactly this argument. On the other hand, they were also enjoined to make the curriculum as relevant as possible to students, particularly those of color, by including texts written about or produced by members of the pupils' ethnic group.

Consequently, after prospective teachers identified the six texts they would teach to eleventh graders, we presented them with descriptions of three different school settings, one at a time (see Appendix). We asked them if they would teach the texts they originally selected in each of these settings and, if not, which texts they would substitute and why. The three school settings feature differences in the racial, social and cultural makeup of the student population and the community. (Although the descriptions appear stereotypical, they describe characteristics of actual schools in the greater Lansing area.)

Again, we did not have in mind particular "correct" responses. As noted above, academics and activists disagree among themselves on this issue. Rather, as is true throughout the interview, we wanted to elicit the thinking that lies behind beliefs and ideas, regardless of what these are. We are only beginning to document and understand prospective teachers' beliefs about teaching diverse learners. Analyses of data generated by this task can contribute to our understanding.

Along this same line, we also asked students how they would teach "The Raven" in different school contexts, one urban and predominantly African-American and the other in a predominantly white, low-income, and religiously fundamentalist rural community. Similarly, we asked whether or not they would teach about literary criticism—and how—in these same two settings. Again, our purpose was to learn more about how prospective teachers think about the relationship between different pupil populations, literary knowledge, and teaching.

Assessing pupil knowledge and understanding. This section includes tasks that focus on prospective teachers' ideas about teaching—about the English curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and diverse learners. One of these tasks involves prospective teachers in thinking about the assessment of student learning. Because half of those in the study were, at the time of the baseline interview, only in their second year of college, we thought asking them to devise an assessment of student knowledge from scratch might be a bit overwhelming. We decided, instead, to write various kinds of evaluative questions ourselves and ask the prospective teachers to select from these to construct a test. We asked all the prospective teachers to perform the task for *Romeo and Juliet*. Then, they repeated the task for their choice from among the following texts: *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Julius Caesar*. Again, we relied on Applebee's survey of teachers to identify the book-length texts most frequently taught—in this case, in ninth grade classrooms (Applebee, 1989). We wanted to use texts prospective teachers would likely find familiar.

After asking prospective teachers what they think ninth graders could learn from reading *Romeo and Juliet*, we asked them how they would find out what students knew or learned from reading the play. This question allowed prospective teachers to describe ways of evaluating pupil knowledge other than a conventional written test. We then asked them to peruse a list of twenty questions about *Romeo and Juliet* and to construct a 55-minute assessment for ninth graders from the items we presented them or items they created (see appendix). The types of questions—all of which we had written ourselves—range from matching characters' names with descriptions of their roles in the play to "craft" questions about Shakespeare's use of rhymed couplets to "evaluative" questions about assigning responsibility for the couple's deaths to "reader-response" items about the nature of their love. Subsequently, we asked them what they would regard as incorrect answers to the questions they chose and what they could learn about a pupil's understanding from such a response. To close, we asked if they would want to ask other types of questions.

Although we did want to learn the types of questions they are inclined to ask pupils to assess their learning, we were, again, primarily interested in their pedagogical reasoning, how they thought about what pupils should know about literary texts and how they could find out whether pupils knew this.

Teaching strategies. For the exit interview, we included a series of items to tap students' ideas of teaching strategies.[2] We did not include this in the baseline interview because we did not wish to suggest to the students in the study that they should know about or have thought about these kinds of issues. By the time of the exit interview, those who were seniors had taken both the methods courses in the English Department and the senior-level subject-matter specific course in the Teacher Education Department.

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The first task involved students in identifying the strategies for teaching literature in high school. After asking them a global question about strategies, we presented them with a list and asked them why they thought teachers used these various strategies. Again, we wished to learn about their understandings of pedagogical reasoning—how and why teachers make the decisions that they do. We also asked them if they would avoid particular strategies. We included this question because in the baseline interviews we found that most of the students defined themselves as teachers more by what they wanted to avoid than by what they wanted to do.

Teaching scenarios. Next, we asked students to read and comment on a series of teaching scenarios. The first involves a teacher who, in teaching a play, uses a variety of strategies—individual pupil research, mini-lecture by the teacher, small-group work, acting out scenes, showing a video of the play, comparison of different productions, a test on the plot, themes, and symbols, and an assignment to write a new final act. We asked them why the teacher would do each of these.

The next scenario describes a teacher who teaches poetry by reading the poem aloud and assigning a worksheet which pupils complete in class. He gives a test at the end of the unit drawn from the study sheets. Again, we asked students why the teacher does what he does.

The third scenario presents a problem: The teacher notices that, although her pupils claim to have read the short stories she assigns, they cannot answer questions about what they have read. Then, we offer students two solutions to the teacher's problem. In the first, the teacher begins with questions that require her pupils' to reflect on their own experiences. She then uses their experiences as a bridge to the story they are about to read. She also provides guiding questions for pupils to answer as they progress through the story. In the second, she shows a video of the story and quizzes pupils on it before they read. She also finds two novels of youths dealing with contemporary problems that she plans to read with the class. Finally, she allows her pupils to choose a Stephen King novel to read and report on. The point is not to have the prospective teachers choose which solution is best but, again, to analyze for us why a teacher might pursue these solutions.

Students' analyses of these scenarios provide us with information on their knowledge and understanding of why teachers use particular strategies. Learning more about their knowledge of teaching literature is a central focus of our study. In addition, this information will help us understand more about the relationship between their views of what literature is and how they think literature is taught and learned.

Course-specific interviews

During the two years that we follow the prospective teachers, we conducted the ULT Interview with them twice—at the beginning and end of the study. In addition, during each semester of the study, we interviewed prospective teachers about their experiences in their English and methods courses. These interviews were course-specific. Questions focused on the content of the curriculum and the prospective teachers' understandings of the content; the way the class is conducted and prospective teachers' interactions with classmates and the instructor; and the texts, assignments, and exams. We also attempted to collect copies of students' written work although they frequently forgot to bring their work to the interviews.

The purpose of these interviews is both to document the kinds of opportunities to learn that prospective teachers encounter as well as providing additional data on their developing understanding.

Individualized Questions

We prepared for the exit interviews by rereading the transcripts of the prior interviews. This allowed us to identified areas of the students' experience and thinking that we did not understand. In particular, we were interested in what appeared to us—as outsiders—to be contradictory views, ideas, or beliefs. Consequently, for each student, we developed a list of specific questions. We were careful to ask these questions at the end of the last interview. Although our reasons for asking questions about what students had told us in prior interviews was to better

understand their ideas and thinking, we knew that we risked conveying to the students that we were evaluating their responses. This we wanted to avoid at all costs.

Data Analysis

We are conducting two types of analyses. The first is an across-the-sample examination of students' knowledge and beliefs along several dimensions: literature as a category, views of theories of criticism, approaches to textual analysis, conceptions of knowledge in literature, reasons for studying literature, what it means to teach and learn literature, how literature is best taught and learned, the role of literary theory in teaching and learning, the traditional canon in schools, the role of context in determining the content of the English curriculum, and so on. A vital part of this analysis is looking for patterns in prospective teachers' reasoning within these dimensions.

The second type of analysis focuses on individual students' thinking and learning. In this analysis, we are examining, for instance, the relationship between students' beliefs about what constitutes knowing and knowledge in literature and their beliefs about teaching and learning literature. The extensive background information we are gathering from students allows us to place such analyses in the context of the students' experience, both in school and university and in the broader context of their society and culture.

Finally, we are looking at the understandings students develop in the context of the opportunities that they have had to learn. This requires analyzing data on courses to figure what students have had opportunities to learn and how these opportunities have shaped their understandings, knowledge, and beliefs.

We are entering the interview data into a database that will enable us to do both types of analyses. In addition, we will scan prospective teachers' written work into the database, providing additional data through which we can track the development of the sample prospective teachers' thinking over time.

Limitations

Because we have chosen to focus on the process of learning over time, our sample of prospective teachers is small. In addition, the sample is not random, although the students are representative of those who typically prepare to teach secondary English. Our purpose is not primarily to make generalizations about all prospective English teachers; we want to learn more about the reasoning processes of a representative group of prospective English teachers and the influences on that process.

Because we spend nearly six hours discussing literature with each prospective teacher, they probably learned from their interactions with us. Their comments to us during and after the interviews confirmed that our conversations provoke them to think about questions and to consider perspectives that they otherwise might not have thought about or considered. Conventionally, such learning would be considered a major methodological flaw. We, however, designed the interview so that we could document their learning during the interview. The evolution and development of their thinking was precisely our primary interest. If doing the tasks on the interview causes them to reconfigure their understandings or beliefs, that would in itself be significant.

Another limitation is in the type of evidence we have of change in students' thinking and understanding. If students' responses to particular tasks differed from the baseline to the exit interview, we do not know if the difference represented genuine change or rather that the student merely responded to the question differently the second time. As a consequence, we are extremely modest in our claims about student learning.

Attributing the sources of changes in the prospective teachers' thinking, highly problematic under the best of circumstances, becomes even more uncertain in a study such as this. Again, in describing changes in their thinking, we are not intent on assigning particular weights to the various experiences prospective teachers have had. Rather, we want to understand more about how they accommodate new experiences and new ideas, particularly those they encounter in their English courses. Understanding this accommodation involves learning about prospective teachers' prior experiences and their resulting beliefs, values, and knowledge as the context in which they encounter new ideas, information, and perspectives. We cannot, therefore, attribute changes in their thinking or ideas to any particular course or experience. We can, however, characterize differences in their responses during the time they

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are taking English courses and describe how particular ideas about literary texts and reading such texts—which we may be able to attribute to particular courses or experiences—may have interacted with their initial understandings and beliefs.

Thoughts on Our Experiences in Collecting the Data

Currently, we are analyzing our data. To offer findings at this point would be premature. Below, we present one of our working hypotheses merely to illustrate the types of issues we are pursuing.

Preliminary analysis of our data suggests that the context in which someone is asked to use or draw on their knowledge strongly influences what someone believes appropriate knowledge. In our interviews, when confronted with the descriptions of four different theories of literature, a number of the prospective teachers in our pilot sample embraced both a traditional-humanist and a reader-response position toward reading literature. Superficially, to the observer, these positions conflict. Traditional humanists hold that authors, in writing, embed specific ideas and meanings in their texts that the reader extracts by "just reading them [texts], letting them dictate what the questions are and the method of approaching them—not forcing them into categories we make up, not treating them as historical products but trying to read them as their authors wished them to be read" (Bloom, 1987, p. 344). Reader response partisans, on the other hand, emphasize the role of the reader in determining the meaning of the text: All readers bring particular questions, understandings, and beliefs to the reading process that interact with the text to spawn interpretation, meaning. Even when we pointed out the conflicts between these two views, prospective teachers continued to endorse both.

A simplistic explanation is that the prospective teachers didn't genuinely understand the two positions. If they did, they would realize that the two theories are incompatible. Yet, when these same students analyzed the theories, they appeared to comprehend the arguments in each, even when they lacked prior explicit knowledge of the theories. Another explanation is that they aren't attending closely. Such a reading is, however, inconsistent with the thoughtfulness that characterizes their responses to the rest of the interview.

If the explanation isn't misunderstanding or inattention, how can we explain this apparent conflict? How can prospective English teachers hold such apparently contradictory theories of literature? One possibility is that they understand, however tacitly, that different conceptions, different theories fit with different contexts. Viennot, investigating the knowledge of undergraduate physics majors, notes that students draw on both Newtonian and non-Newtonian conceptions of mechanics depending on the context (Viennot, 1979). Prospective teachers, whether they are aware or not, undoubtedly encounter versions of both theories in school and university. Several of those in our pilot sample, particularly those who had completed English methods course work, explicitly recognized reader-response theory. They could believe that, depending on the circumstances, different theories apply.

Another possibility is that previously they had not had to compare, explicitly and consciously, these theories. As Graff (1992) argues, university faculty, although they teach literature from a particular theoretical perspective, rarely acknowledge that perspective:

> A student today can go from a course in which the universality of western culture is taken for granted (and therefore not articulated) to a course in which it is taken for granted (and therefore not articulated) that such claims of universality are fallacious and deceptive. (p. 106)

Consequently, they may be unaware of the profoundly different epistemes each theory represents. Students' responses on the rest of the interview lends support to this interpretation. Only two in the pilot sample seemed even somewhat aware of the wider debate within the field of which these theoretical positions are a part.

This again is not be surprising. Prospective teachers, like other students, usually experience their undergraduate program, including their major, as a series of, at best, vaguely related courses. To understand the debates that keep their field alive and engaging, undergraduates would need opportunities to understand the perspectives of the

different parties to the debate. This is what the "disconnected system of courses" (Graff, 1992, p. 110) that most students experience legislates against.

The prospective teachers we are studying in our current research are participants in a English program that has been designed to rectify such a disconnected experience. Given academic norms, such an attempt is ambitious. Currently, the culture of the university values the academic freedom of the individual faculty member over the right of students to an educational experience that is connected and integrated by design. University administrators pay lip-service to integrated experiences for students. How they coerce frequently recalcitrant and perennially suspicious faculty to cooperate, to plan and design courses together, to agree on a set of ideas or theories students should know is not at all clear.

Summary

Teaching so that all students learn to "create knowledge, meaning, and community in their lives ... reflect and evaluate their own language use ... recognize and evaluate the ways in which others use language to affect them ..." (Lloyd-Jones & Lunsford, 1989, p. 19) demands similar understandings of those who teach. How do prospective English teachers think about literature and the teaching of literature? Are they learning to think about the reading and study of literary texts in ways that would enable them to advance these goals? These are the questions we are addressing in the Understanding Literature for Teaching Study.

Over the past two years, we have tracked 14 prospective English teachers as they progress through their English program. We interviewed these prospective teachers using an extensive interview protocol (ULTI) developed for this project. The interview protocol includes questions about participants' experiences with reading, writing, and literary study both in and outside of school. The heart of the protocol is a series of tasks designed to involve participants in discussing their underlying belief and theories about literary texts and reading and studying these texts. Another series of tasks involves prospective teachers in discussing their ideas about teaching and learning literary texts. In addition, we ask these questions about teaching in different school contexts—to understand more about how prospective teachers think about teaching literary texts to students from different social and cultural groups.

We have focused our analysis on how prospective English teachers think about reading, studying, teaching, and learning about literary texts. The focus is the process of thinking because greater understanding of how prospective teachers think will increase our capacity to design experiences—both in English and in teacher education programs—that help them develop the kinds of understandings needed for teaching. We are currently writing treatments of prospective teachers' thinking about literature and teaching literature to diverse learners both across the full sample as well as intellectual profiles of individuals.

Notes

[1] "We" includes Professor Diane Holt-Reynolds, a senior researcher , and Elizabeth Knepper, Margaret Malenka, and Stephen P. Smith, research assistants, at the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. All these researchers and others—including Lamar Fertig and Jamie Grinburg—have contributed to the research design and the data collection instruments.

[2] By this term, we mean, after the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, "a plan, method, or series of maneuvers or strategems for obtaining a specific goal or result."

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APPENDIX

Note: This is the full text of the interview. It includes all the items that were used in both the baseline and exit versions. In the exit interview, an abbreviated form of the background part was used. This abbreviated form follows the full form. In addition, the exit version did not include the task of selecting from a list of questions on *Huckleberry Finn, The Scarlet Letter, To Kill a Mockingbird, or Julius Caesar*. The baseline version did not include the teaching senarios included under Strategies for Teaching in part three. Finally, the last two parts of the interview—the Course Information and Individualized Questions—were included in the exit interview only.

UNDERSTANDING LITERATURE FOR TEACHING INTERVIEW

National Center for Research on Teacher Learning
Michigan State University

March 1994

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Baseline Version: Instructions for Interviewers

Preparation for interview: Checklist of Materials

Make sure that you have the following before you begin the interview:

- A copy of the interview itself.
- Copies of the various exhibits including:
  1. The 4 literary criticisms
  2. A copy of "The Raven"
  3. A copy of the blurb on Poe's life
  4. A copy of the "FOR STUDY & DISCUSSION" questions on "The Raven."
  5. A copy of the Text Selection Task
  6. Copies of the descriptions of schools A, B, & C
  7. Copies of Test Questions for *Romeo & Juliet*, *Caesar*, *Scarlet Letter*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Huckleberry Finn*.

- A tape recorder that you have tested to ensure that it is recording (see Bill McDiarmid if you need a tape recorder).

- Fresh tapes that you have labeled with the following "ProjB-Lit, Lit IV#__, Pseudonym of informant, Date, 1 of (however many tapes you end up using); Interviewer: (your last name)."

- Include the same information on the video tape.

- A notebook in which to keep notes. Keep notes on what the interviewee is saying as well as any information that may not be captured by an audio tape—facial expressions and reactions, length of time to read something either if it is unusually short or long, questions that you may want to follow up on at the end of a section or of the interview itself and so on. After the interview, also take a few minutes to reflect on the experience—did the interview prompt you to think differently about something? Did new ideas come to you? Idea that you had confirmed? What did it feel like to do the interview with this individual? If you need a notebook, the Center can provide one.

- Form X: A the end of your notebook is a form that asks about the context of interview. Please fill it out.

Introduction

- To introduce the study, say something like: **The National Center for Research on Teacher Learning is funded by the Department of Education in Washington, D.C. We are trying to find out more about how undergraduates come to understand the subjects they study. This is important to understanding what kinds of knowledge people who teach have to draw on when they teach. The interview is not so much a test of what you know as a conversation about how you understand different aspects of literature. At this point, we are trying to develop an interview that gets us the information we need but is also a positive experience for those whom we interview. So if you have any comments on the interview itself and your experience being interviewed, please tell us. Your comments are critical in helping us develop a good interview. Do you have any questions about the Center, the interview, or your participation before we start?**

- If they ask questions that you can't answer or feel uncomfortable answering, write it down & tell them you will ask me and I will call them with a response.

Notes on Procedures

- The dilemma in interviews of this type is between creating a genuine conversation with someone about complex and contested ideas and saying so much that you lead them to the answers you (sometimes subconsciously) seek. Try to be still and listen as much as possible. However, moments will doubtless come during which your talking about yourself or your ideas might encourage the person or help alleviate tension. For instance, in talking about particular books or authors, discussing your own views or reactions might actually facilitate the interview as long as these aren't too contrary to the interviewee's views. As in most things, judgment is the key to good interviewing.

- As you go along, you need to keep in mind that a time will come when you may be writing about one of these people and you will need to be able to explain to a third party why they said what they said. That means you have to be as clear as possible about what they are saying and why. Bearing this in mind can help you to know when and where to probe for more details, rationale, or explanation.

- If you feel the person's attention wandering or boredom setting in, you might suggest a break. If they are preoccupied about getting somewhere else, keep glancing at their watch, etc., you might ask if they would like to schedule another time to finish the interview.

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Exit Version: Introduction

Thank you for making time to talk with me. We appreciate all the time and effort you have put into talking with us over the past year and a half.

The interview we are about to do is very similar to the one we did during the fall of 1992. In fact, some of the questions are exactly the same.

The reason that we are asking you some of the same questions is to find out more about how your thinking has developed since the first time we interviewed you. We don't expect that you will answer these questions the way you answered them the first time--although you might. The point is that you should NOT try to remember how you responded to the questions the first time but just answer them as you think about them now. When it would be helpful to look at your earlier responses, I'll remind you of what you said in the first interview. If you find it tedious to answer these questions again, we apologize in advance.

Just as was true when we interviewd you before, the questions we will be asking you don't have right or wrong answers. Rather, your responses to the question will help us understand how you think about literature and teaching literature. This is what we'd like to learn more about rather than whether or not you know this or that information.

Be sure to ask interviewee to complete information sheet.

Baseline Interview

Part I: Background

Pre-Collegiate

1. **Can you tell me a bit about your background—the neighborhoods you grew up in, the kinds of things you liked to do as a kid, your experience in school, and so on?**

   [The purpose of the question is to get a sense of the kind of experiences the student had growing up. If the student talks about his/her family, fine. If not, don't bring up the family. This is a private matter students should not feel that we are prying.]

2. **Tell me about how your interest in reading and literature developed?**

   [Probe for individuals or experiences—including courses, travel, books, films or TV programs—that may have influenced them. This is a global questions intended to give the student a chance to talk about his/her past experiences and to determine what is pertinent. The interviewer should probe to find out details and, in particular, to find out the student's rationale. Pay particular attention to any individuals that the student mentions, especially if individual is a teacher.]

3. [If interviewee doesn't mention his/her family, ask:] **Did people in the family in which you grew up read much?** [If yes:] **What kinds of things did they read?** [Probe to find out how much people read]

4. **How about story-telling? Do you recall listening to people in your family or neighborhood telling stories?** [If yes:] **Do you recall any of these stories? Could you tell me about them?**

5. [If interviewee doesn't mention anyone reading to him or her, ask:] **Did anyone read to you when you were growing up?** [Probe for: who, what, when, where.]

6. [If interviewee doesn't mention his/her friends, ask:] **When you were growing up, did your friends read much?** [If yes:] **What kinds of things did they read?** [Probe to find out how much people read]

7. **Do you recall talking with anyone outside of school about what you or they were reading?** [Probe for circumstance—who, what, where, when.]

8. **What about writing—what do you remember about learning to write? What kinds of things did you write?** [Probe for: frequency, occasion, type of writing, audience if not apparent]

9. **Tell me what you remember about reading and literature in elementary school.**

10. **And what about writing? What do remember about writing in elementary school?**

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11. **What about English or American literature classes in high school? Which did you take?**

[For each course interviewee mentions above, ask the following:] **When you think back to that class, what stands out for you?** [Pause to allow the student to bring things up on his/her own. If after waiting for 5 or so seconds they seem stuck or puzzled by the question, ask:]

Do any particular projects, assignments, books, or classroom activities stand out for you? It could be something your really liked or something that you didn't.

What about writing? What kind of writing did you do in your English/American literature classes?

12. **And what about other literature classes? Did you study literature other than English or American literature in high school?**

13. **And what about composition or writing courses? Did you take any in high school?**

14. **What about other classes in high school in which you did a lot of reading or writing?**

[For each course, ask:] **When you think back to that class, what stands out for you?** [Pause to allow the student to bring things up on his/her own. If after waiting for 5 or so seconds they seem stuck or puzzled by the question, ask:]

Do any particular projects, assignments, books, or classroom activities stand out for you? It could be something your really liked or something that you didn't.

15. **Do you recall any other courses you took in high school in which the teacher paid a lot of attention to literature or writing?**

[**If no**, skip the next question.]

16. [If student mentions such a course, ask:] **When you think back to that class, what stands out for you?** [Pause to allow the student to bring things up on his/her own. If after waiting for 5 or so seconds they seem stuck or puzzled by the question, ask:]

Do any particular projects, assignments, books, or classroom activities stand out for you? It could be something your really liked or something that you didn't.

17. [If student hasn't previously discussed his/her attitudes towards literature and other courses, ask:] **What were your two or three favorite courses in high school? Why?**

18. **What about the flip side of that—what were your two or three least favorite subjects? Why?**

19. **What kinds of things did you like to read on your own when you were in elementary and high school?** [Probe for frequency, occasion, favorite authors, favorite genres, motivation, source of knowledge about particular works and authors.]

College

20. **Tell me about why you decided to major in English. . . . When did you make this decision?**

[Probe for individuals or experiences—including courses, travel, books, films or TV programs—that may have influenced them. This is a global questions intended to give the student a chance to talk about his/her college experiences and to determine what is pertinent. The interviewer should probe to find out details and, in particular, to find out the student's rationale. Pay particular attention to any individuals that the student mentions, especially if individual is a faculty member.]

21. [If student decided to major in literature before coming to MSU, ask:]

Why did you decided to come to MSU to study English?

22. **What English classes, including ATL courses, have you taken at the college level?**

[If you have a data sheet for the student, check off each course as he/she discusses it.]

[List all courses the student mentions & ask who taught each. Then, for each literature or ATL course the student mentions, ask the sequence of questions below.]

23. **Thinking back to** [title or number of ATL or English course], **what stands out in your mind about it?**

[If student asks you to be more specific, say something like:] **Was there anything that you learned or any experiences—good or bad—that you had in the course that seem important to you?**

24. **Did anything about the course disappoint you?** [Follow-up, if needed:] **Were there things you hoped to learn that you didn't learn? Why do you think this happened?**

25. **What kinds of things were you assigned to read in the course?**

26. **Would you describe what the classes were like? Who did most of the talking? Did you have any opportunity to discuss or debate issues or ideas with the instructor? How about with your fellow students?** [If yes to either:] **How often did that happen? Did you find it useful? Why or why not?**

27. **Could you describe the kinds of assignments you had to do?** [Probe to find out the type, frequency, and length of assignments.]

[For written assignments, ask:] **What kinds of writing did you do in the course?** [We are trying to determine what kinds of writing the student had to do for the course]. **How many writing assignments did you have? What were they like? Did you ever have a chance to rewrite or revise any of the things you wrote for the courses? Were you asked to keep a journal?** [If yes:] **What kinds of things did you write in the journal?**

28. **Did you have any tests or exams?** [If yes:] **How many? What were they like? Did they include essay questions? Short answer? Fill-in the blanks? Multiple-choice?**

How did you prepare for the exam(s)? Review your notes? Review readings?

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Did anything on the exams surprise you? [That is, the exam included types of questions or require knowledge that the interviewee didn't anticipate.]

29. **Did you talk with your instructor outside of class?** [Probe for frequency & reason.] **Were any of those conversations about the content of the course?**

30. **Was there a TA for the course? Did you talk with him or her about the course?** [If yes, probe for frequency & content of conversations.]

31. **Did you keep the notes that you took in the course?**

32. **Is there anything else you want to tell me about the course?**

[Note Bene: Repeat this sequence of questions for each Literature course.]

33. **What's the best English or literature course you've taken?**

What made it so good? [If the student has already described the course above, don't ask him/her to repeat. If not, probe for details of how the course was taught.]

34. **What about the flip side—What's the worst English or literature course you've taken?**

What made it bad? [If the student has already described the course above, don't ask him/her to repeat. If not, probe for details of how the course was taught.]

35. **Have you taken any other college courses that have dealt with literature?**

[If yes:] **Describe the course for me.** [Probe for opportunities for discussion, types of assignments, readings, etc.]

36. **In college, have you found that literature is treated differently than it was in high school?** [If they seem to want more explanation, ask something like: **[Have you encountered a view of literature or interpretations of particular literary works that differ from the views and interpretations you encountered in high school?** [If yes:] **Please tell me about the difference(s).**

Exit Interview

Part I: Background

1. **Maybe we could start with you telling me a little about what has been happening since we talked in the fall.**

2. **Are you still majoring in English and are you still planning on teaching English in high school?**

3. **Why do you think we teach literature in college?** [Pause for answer.] **How about in high schools?**

4. **Have you had time to do any reading outside of coursework? If so, what have you been reading? Can you tell me a little bit about that? If you had more time, what would you like to read?**

5. **Have you may any discoveries about yourself as a reader or about literature that you'd like to get into the record?**

6. **Why do you read? What kinds of things do you get from reading?**

7. **What about writing? Have you had time to do any writing beyond what was required for your classes?**

8. **Have you made any discoveries about yourself as an author?**

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Part II: Knowledge of Literature

Classification Task

[Be patient and give the students time to elaborate. Try to avoid being judgmental and avoid body language that might suggest you are surprised or disagree. We want to know how they think about the matter. This is not a test on cultural literacy. In short, be sensitive.]

Preparation: The Texts

Beforehand, make sure you have the materials. These should include the following:

The Complete Works of Shakespeare
The Origin of Species
Let Us Now Praise Famous Men
Native Son
A novel by Stephen King
A contemporary romance or fantasy novel
A high school or college textbook
New Yorker magazine
A color magazine advertisement
A copy of the poem, "In A Station of the Metro" (Ezra Pound)
A memo
Ebony magazine
People magazine
The *New York Times*
The *State Journal*
A copy of the lyrics of "Total Control" by the Rap group, "Guy"
A Calvin & Hobbes cartoon
A copy of the poem, "The Ball Turret Gunner" (Randall Jarrell)
A copy of a religious rite
Coffee maker instructions
A children's picture book

Presentation of texts

Put all the **books** on the table. The order in which they are stacked is not important. Let the interviewees pick them up & examine them in any order they choose. Keep the other texts in a folder, ready at hand.

The materials once presented should be left on the table and let the student handle them and revise their opinions as many times as they wish.

With magazines and newspapers the interviewee might answer that some parts could be considered literature and some parts not. In this case ask: **Can you tell me more?** or **Please, say more.** If the student still does not say anything ask: **Please, tell me which parts are you thinking about when you say some parts could be considered literature? Why is it?**

- After they have looked through the books and talked about them, next hand them the ***New Yorker*** magazine.
- Hand them the **advertisement** next. After they talk about the ad, ask if they would consider any printed advertisement literature.
- Now give them the **"In a Station of the Metro."**
- Then hand them the **memo**.
- Now hand then ***Ebony***. After they've commented on Ebony, hand them ***People***.
- Next, hand them the ***New York Times***. If they say this or any part of it is literature, then hand them the *State Journal*. But if they don't think the *Times* is literature, don't bother with the *State Journal*.
- Next hand them the **Rap song lyrics**.
- Then hand them the **Calvin & Hobbes cartoon**. If they don't think this is literature, ask if C & H cartoons collected in a book would be literature.
- Next give them **"The Ball Turret Gunner."** [Note: We've found that some folks don't consider poetry to be literature but rather a category unto itself. If they don't think poetry is lit, try to find out more about how they categorize it.]
- Then hand them the **pastoral missive**.
- Next give them the **coffee maker instructions**.
- Finally, give them the **children's picture book**.

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9. **I want to shift gears a bit here and ask you to do an activity that you did last time. But first, could you tell me what texts or books or works you think of when you hear the word "literature"?**

Now I want to present you with a bunch of different texts and we want you to tell me whether or not you consider each of them literature. As we are most interested in HOW you think about this issue, please think aloud and say whatever comes to your mind as you look at each text. [At this point, present the books to the student while keeping visible, but on the side of the table, the rest of the material].

Additional notes on procedure

- If student expresses concern about earlier responses to this task and wonders what was said last time, say something like. **What's important right now is to approach this as if it were the first time. That way you can really focus on what you think right now.**

- Without being pushy, inquisitorial, or confrontive, try to determine whether or not the student is familiar with the text. If the way they talk about the text doesn't indicate whether or not they have read it, you might ask something like, **How familiar are you with this text?**

- Probably, by the middle of the second part, the interviewee will already have started to suggest some criteria for the selection and classification. Many times there are inconsistencies and contradictions. GIVE THEM TIME, LET THEM REFLECT ALOUD. Try not to probe too early or too often—try to allow the person time to think and not feel pressured.

- If the student is unclear or you did not understand ask: **Please, tell me more...**

- If the student was mostly silent and/or was not explicit about some criteria, ask: **Can you tell me how you decided? What influenced your decisions and ideas about this classification?** Probe: **Why is a particular text literature and another text isn't?** (It is important to try to unveil how they decided also to leave a text out of literature as well as in literature.)

- Usually students realize during the course of the interview that they have some inconsistencies in their criteria. Usually they start to recognize that some past experiences, particularly classes in high school or college, influenced their views on what is considered literature. Many decide to change some selections and review some criteria. Let them do that and ask them again if they were not sufficiently explicit : **I notice that you are changing or questioning some of your previous decisions, please tell me more about it.**

Probing

- **I will try to summarize some of your ideas to check that I got it right, please help me and stop me when necessary so you can clarify it for me.**

  We might say one or two things wrong because we didn't really get it. However, it will be useful to say something wrong on purpose so we can probe their perspective. Also: Ask if there is an apparent inconsistency in classification—for example, if they say that one poem is literature and the other isn't literature.

- **Is there anything that you want to comment about? Is there anything else that you want me to know? Anything else you want to say?**

  Usually here they ask you for your views. This might develop into a further source of data since their clarifying questions may give us more insights.

10. **When we did this last time, you talked about _____. This time, you said _____.**

- **What do you make of the differences between your responses to the two experiences?**
- **Can you talk about any experiences which may have influenced your thinking about this task?**

<u>Experience with literature and beliefs about "knowing literature"</u>

11. **I'd like for you to take a moment & think of something you've read or a writer that has meant a lot to you. Then, I'd like for you to tell me about your choice.** [Make sure to probe for interviewee's rationale for her/his choice.]

12. **Where did you encounter _____?**

How did you come to know about _____?

[If they mention a particular author:] **Did you try to find out more about the author?** [If the author is NOT contemporary or writes from a cultural perspective likely to be unfamiliar to the interviewee:] **How about the [times/circumstances/culture] in which the author lived/lives?**

13. **When you think about what it means to know or understand literature, what sort of ideas come to mind? What do you think of when you hear the phrase "to know literature?" How did you come to think that way?**

14. **As you probably know, we are trying to find out more about how people think about literature and what it means to say someone knows literature. Can you think of someone who you would say knows literature?** [Get the name and/or description of person—that is, who they are and how the interviewee knows him/her. If they nominate themselves, that's fine.]

15. **How did you come to believe that this person knows literature?** [Listen carefully & note in writing what the person says. You will be asking him/her about his/her response.]

16. **You said** [whatever the person offered as evidence that X knows literature] **as indicating that _____**[the person mentioned as knowing literature] **knows literature. Can you tell me how you came to think of this as indicating that a person knows literature?**

17. **Do you think of yourself as someone who knows literature? What would it take for you to start thinking of yourself as someone who knows literature?**

18. **How has studying literature at MSU helped you know literature?**

19. **What other experiences have contributed to your knowledge of literature?**

20. **What do you think it takes for someone to teach literature in schools?**

21. **Tell me about your experience in putting together what you've been learning in your English courses with what you've been learning in your education courses.**

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Literary theories

22. **Here** [hand the interviewee Literary Crit 1] **is what someone has said about literature. Take some time to read it. When you feel ready, I want you to tell me what you think of it.**

- Keep track of how long the person takes to read the criticism.

> Literary Crit 1
>
> A **work of literature** is a self-contained world. The **meaning** is found within the text itself. The various parts of the text may conflict or be in tension. The form or structure of the work pulls these parts together into a coherent whole. The form *is* the meaning.
>
> Since a literary work contains its own reality and its form is its meaning, knowledge of the intentions or the life and times of the **author** is *not* important for understanding what the work means.
>
> Similarly, since the work exists in and is its own world, **society** has little influence on the meaning of a text.
>
> The **reader** must experience the meaning of the work. However, experiencing the meaning is not simply a matter of responding subjectively and/or affectively to the work. Experiencing the meaning requires hard-nosed, rigorous, objective analyses of the text.
>
> This is where the **critic** comes in. The critic cannot merely paraphrase the meaning for the reader. Indeed, since the meaning of a work is its form, it cannot be paraphrased. "Close" reading—attention to the use and meaning of words, symbols, metaphors and structure—is required. The critic helps the reader learn to do this close reading.

[You can take the time while the interviewee is reading to catch up with your notes—i.e., try not to sit there and stare. When the interviewee indicates s/he is ready, ask:]

Well, what did you think?

[If the interviewee makes a claim about what the critic means, probe:]

What makes you think that?

[Be careful to probe any terms, especially terms that are familiar and slip easily off the tongue—words and phrases such as "reader-response," "deconstruction," "New Criticism," "feminism," "traditional," and so on. Better that the interviewee think you illiterate than to assume you know what s/he means only to discover months later that you do not.]

[When you believe the interviewee has said all s/he has to say, ask:]

Is there anything else you'd like to say about this?

23. **Here's another card** [hand the interviewee Literary Crit2]. **Take some time to read it. When you feel ready, I want you to tell me what you think of it.**

Well, what did you think?

- Keep track of how long the person takes to read the criticism.

Literary Crit 2

The reader largely determines the meaning of a **work of literature**. Nevertheless, the text sets constraints on the meaning that the reader can find because its language and structure elicit certain common responses rather than others.

One group of critics who adhere to this idea claim that all **authors** necessarily have an intended audience in mind when writing. Other critics argue that meaning is created by reading; thus the reader is really the **author**.

The **reader** plays the central role in both of these views. If the author writes for an intended reader (audience), the reader effectively controls the meaning of the text. If the reader is the author, then the reader creates whatever meaning the text has through the act of reading.

Forces within society affect the backgrounds that authors and readers bring to a text. Similar backgrounds and perspectives lead author and reader to create meanings for a text that are compatible.

The critics define and write about the respective roles of the text, author, reader, society, and critics. Some critics primarily describe how and why these roles developed and are the way they are; other critics attempt to demonstrate how the reader functions as author of what is read.

[If the interviewee makes a claim about what the critic means, probe:]

What makes you think that?

[Be careful to probe any terms, especially terms that are familiar and slip easily off the tongue—words and phrases such as "reader-response," "deconstruction," "New Criticism," "feminism," "traditional," and so on. Better that the interviewee think you illiterate than to assume you know what s/he means only to discover months later that you do not.]

[When you believe the interviewee has said all s/he has to say, ask:]

Is there anything else you'd like to say about this?

24. **Here's another card** [hand the interviewee Literary Crit.] **Take some time to read it. When you feel ready, I want you to tell me what you think of it.**

- Keep track of how long the person takes to read the criticism.

Literary Crit.]

A **work of literature** exposes the reader to other points of view, other imaginations, other emotions and actions, and enables the reader to see more and further and, hence, to become a better person. The traditions and cultural values found in the greatest literature represent some of the finest sentiments and achievements of the species: particular notions of the True and Beautiful and of enduring moral and aesthetic values; an affinity for the "eternal" human truths; a sense of a shared humanity and a deep and abiding awareness of the importance of democratic ideals.

The **author**, particularly the author of a great work, creates a world so powerful and alive that a reader actually experiences themes that are ageless and comes to understand universal truths.

The **reader**'s role is to discover the meaning of the text, a meaning that transcends the time and circumstances in which it was written. In discovering this meaning, the reader also learns about her or his own existence and shared humanity as well as his or her individuality and distinctive heritage. A reader reads to become a more complete and better person.

The ideals and truths depicted in literature can only imperfectly be realized in society. But by reading and becoming a better person, the individual contributes to the improvement of society as a whole.

The **critic** helps the reader to learn to read critically, to find the meaning more readily. The reader thus becomes capable of experiencing the meaning more deeply and intensely and, hence, gains increased pleasure and understanding from reading.

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Well, what did you think?

[If the interviewee makes a claim about what the critic means, probe:]

What makes you think that?

[Be careful to probe any terms, especially terms that are familiar and slip easily off the tongue—words and phrases such as "reader-response," "deconstruction," "New Criticism," "feminism," "traditional," and so on. Better that the interviewee think you illiterate than to assume you know what s/he means only to discover months later that you do not.]

[When you believe the interviewee has said all s/he has to say, ask:]

Is there anything else you'd like to say about this?

25. **Here's the last card** [hand the interviewee Literary Card]. **Take some time to read it. When you feel ready, I want you to tell me what you think of it.**

• Keep track of how long the person takes to read the criticism.

Literary Card

A **work of literature** has no fixed or constant meaning. A single word can be defined in multiple ways, and each definition of a given word is a definition of that word by default: that is, because it is not the definition of a different word. Each of the myriad words, separately and strung together, impart to the text an uncertainty and indeterminableness. Other texts, past and future, entwine with a work. Also present in any work are faint suggestions of alternative texts that are absent only because the author chose to write the one written.

The words used and the meaning the **author** wants cannot coincide; notions about the author's intention and original meaning are merely empty phrases.

The **reader** will find at most an ebb and flow of shadowy meanings that fade, reform, fade again.

What is true of a single work is true of Literature as a whole; and if Literature cannot capture and hold meaning, can there be any ultimate meaning in society?

The role of the **critic** is to "defamiliarize" the text: to enable the reader to see that the appearance of meaning is but illusion; to expose as rhetoric claims that the traditional moral and cultural values transmitted by "Great Literature" are immutable and eternal truths. It is through this rhetoric that traditional authority and privilege perpetuates itself.

Well, what did you think?

[If the interviewee makes a claim about what the critic means, probe:]

What makes you think that?

[Be careful to probe any terms, especially terms that are familiar and slip easily off the tongue—words and phrases such as "reader-response," "deconstruction," "New Criticism," "feminism," "traditional," and so on. Better that the interviewee think you illiterate than to assume you know what s/he means only to discover months later that you do not.]

[When you believe the interviewee has said all s/he has to say, ask:]

Is there anything else you'd like to say about this?

26. [If the interviewee hasn't compared the quotations, ask:]

How would you compare these different views? [Probe to make sure that the interviewee discuss each of the quotations in relation to the others.]

Which is closest to your idea of literature? Why?

What do you find in the others that you don't agree with?

27. **Is there a theory of literature that you prefer that we haven't included?** [If yes:] **How does it differ from these four?**

Are there things about literature that you believe but that these authors left out?

28. **How do you think it happens that people disagree about literature?**

29. **What experiences have you had reading about or studying literary theory?**

Why study literature?

30. **What would you like to see—more, the same, or less attention to the printed texts in school and society?** [We want to find out how they think about reading, what kind of emphasis they think should be placed on reading and printed text. be sure to get at the reasons behind what they say.]

31. **Suppose for a moment that you were talking with a friend about a book you both liked. Another friend, overhearing your conversation, interrupts, saying, "Why are you spending so much time analyzing that? Why can't you just read and enjoy without picking it apart like that?" How would you respond?** [Probe to get a the reasons behind the position the interviewee takes.]

32. **Now suppose for a moment that you were a teacher. You are teaching, say, 11th graders a particular text—a story or book or poem or essay. In the middle of the class, a student raises her hand and asks, "Why are we spending so much time analyzing. Why can't we just read and enjoy? Why do we have to pick it apart like this?" How would you respond?** [Probe to get a the reasons behind the position the interviewee takes.]

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Part 3: Knowledge of Teaching Literature

Now, we want to change gears yet again. We are interested in what you think about literature but we are also interested in how you think about teaching literature. That's what the remaining questions focus on.

Poe & The Raven—Knowledge of Literature

33. **Have you encountered Poe in any MSU courses?**

34. **What do you think of his work?** [If they talk about Poe as critic, ask about his poetry and short stories.]

35. **What do you think of him as a writer?**

Here is a copy of "The Raven." Read it, and when you're finished we'll talk a little about what you think is going on in this poem.

- Keep track of how long the person takes to read the poem.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary
Over many quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'T is some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;-vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow-sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
"'T is some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"

Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard tapping somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment, and this mystery explore;—
'T is the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered, "Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of 'Never—nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my sad fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore

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Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;
Quaff, oh, quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—
Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting—
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still* is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

Are you finished? Good. I'm about to ask you a really ambiguous question, and that may feel odd for you, but I'm eager to understand "The Raven" the way you do without biasing you too much. So, I'd really like to know what you think of this poem. Tell me about it.

36. **If you think of this poem from your perspective as an English major, is there anything you'd add? Anything about your original analysis you'd especially want to highlight or explain differently? Is there anything you feel would be less important or not important at all?**

Teaching the Raven

37. **"The Raven" is a poem you could find yourself teaching one day. Would you choose to teach it if you found it in the anthology your students had been assigned? Could you explain what factors might affect your decision? Anything else?** [Probe for additional considerations like: students' interest in the poem, its fame, Poe's fame, this person's own interest in or admiration of the poem or the poet.]

38. **Let's assume for a moment that this poem is important to teach in a high school curriculum.**

- **Think about grades 9 through 12. Where do you think this poem could best be included?**
- **Would this be a difficult poem for students? What helps you decide?**
- **How do you predict students will react to this poem? Will they find poetry in general difficult?**

39. **Imagine that you were going to "teach this poem": What would you focus on?** [Probe around here. Find out what this person wants students to learn or feel or believe.] **What do you want them to learn by doing that?**

40. **If I were a visitor in your classroom when you were teaching this poem, what would I likely see you doing?**

- **How about the students—what would they likely be doing? From the first moment that students see the poem through to the last time they talk, think or write about it, what might be going on in your classroom?**
- **Tell me what you can about the history of these ideas. And why is that what I'd see going on?**
- [Probe about all the methodological parts this person offers. Be sure to find out how students will read the poem—as homework, in-class silently, orally taking turns, etc.]

41. **Would you want students to know about Poe's life? Could you explain how you decided that would be important (or not so important)?**

[If they say they would want students to know about Poe's life, ask:] **What aspects of his life would you like them to know about?** [Probe for why they think these aspects of Poe's life are important for students' to know about.]

42. [If yes, ask:] **How would they find out about Poe's life?** [Probe why this is what the interviewee would have his/her students do.]

43. **Is there information besides something about Poe's life that you think would be important for them to know?**

[If yes:] **How would they get this information?**

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44. **Critics differ in their opinions about Poe.**

- Do you think you might show students or tell them about critic's views?
- Can you think of some reasons why this might not be worthwhile?
- Given what you know right now, what would you do? What would be some reasons for your decision?

45. **Let's imagine that you did decide to discuss a variety of critic's views. Suppose a student asked you, "Mr./Ms _____, which one is right?" or "Who do you agree with?" What might you say?**

46. **"The Raven" is often included in school anthologies. Typically, there are questions for readers to answer after they read the poem. Here is set of questions we found in one anthology. After you've had time to read them, we'll talk about them.**

[Give person the questions from the anthology.]

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

The Raven

1. The first stanza of "The Raven" presents a speaker who is physically exhausted and under obvious emotional strain. He reads, as we learn in the next stanza, to distract himself from sorrow, but the "quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore" implies a taste for the occult or the fantastic. How do these details relate to his later assumption that the raven is an agent of the supernatural?

2. At first the raven makes the speaker smile (line 43). But his first speech to the raven associates the bird with Pluto, the ruler of infernal regions (lines 45-48). What does this tell us of, but what is truly in his mind?

3. Lines 49-78 take the speaker through a number of reactions: surprise that the bird speaks; the melancholy assumption that this companion will fly from him as "other friends" have done; a sensible explanation of how the bird may have learned its single word; and even playful amusement. Still, it becomes clear that, beneath his apparent assurance, the speaker is moving toward hysteria. What loss of control is indicated in line 74? Why is it appropriate that this stanza should end with the speaker now using the word nevermore?

4. Since the raven repeats only a single word, the significance of Nevermore as an answer depends entirely on the question asked. In the dialogue of lines 81-95, how does the speaker use the bird to confirm his own worst fears?

5. After the frenzy with which he proclaims that the raven's word is a "lie" and tries to drive the bird from him, the speaker seems strangely calm in the last stanza, as if he had recovered his reason. How does the repetition of the phrase, "still is sitting" (line 103) indicate that this is not so? How does the poet make this repeated phrase sound even more ominous? Which other lines in the final stanza suggest that the speaker may never return to his senses?

47. **Some people say that anthology questions should be free from bias or obvious interpretative stances. With this in mind, how would you rate these questions?**

48. **How helpful are these questions for you as a reader in thinking about the poem? In what way? How did you decide?**

- **Would you use any of these questions with students?**
- **[If yes, ask] Which ones?**
- **[If no, ask]: Can you tell me more about why you think they aren't helpful? What questions would be helpful?**

49. **What seems to be the purpose of these questions? How can you tell?**

50. **Are there additional questions you'd want students to consider? Could you give me some examples? What makes these valuable for students?**

51. **Help me understand something. When I first asked you about "The Raven," you said _____; from the perspective of an English major you said _____; when you talked about teaching it, you said _____. Could you help me understand how these ideas relate to each other?**

52. **If some of your students were having trouble reading the poem, what would you do?**

53. **How would you go about finding out whether or not your students learned what you wanted them to learn about the poem? [Probe for details. If interviewee says s/he would "test" them, ask for details of what would be on the test, what the format would be, etc.] Are there other ways that you would find out what they learned about the poem?**

54. **What kinds of writing tasks could you imagine assigning connected to "The Raven?" [Probe for details & rationale.] Suppose you got back papers from some of your students that were below the standards you expect. What would you do about it?**

55. **Let's say you were teaching in an inner-city high school where reading scores have been low for a number of years. [Hand interviewee description of inner city school: low reading scores, African-American students, impoverished families.] Again, "The Raven" is part of the curriculum. How would you approach teaching the poem in such a setting? Is there anything about such a setting that would lead you to expect these students to have difficulty with this poem? But if they did have difficulty with the poem, how would you explain their having difficulty? [Probe for details again. If the interviewee describe an approach that differs from that s/he described above, ask why.]**

56. **Now, let's say you were teaching in a rural high school. [Hand interviewee description of rural high school: white students, low-income families, members of fundamentalist church.] Again, "The Raven" is part of the district curriculum. How would you approach teaching the poem in such a setting? Is there anything about such a setting that would lead you to expect these students to have difficulty with this poem? But if they did have difficulty with the poem, how would you explain their having difficulty?[Probe for details again. If the interviewee describe an approach that differs from that s/he described above, ask why.]**

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Teaching Literary Theory

57. **As an English major, you may have come across a lot of talk about literary theory. Do you think that literary theory or criticism is something that high school students should know about? Why or why not?**

58. **At what grade level do you think students should start learning about these theoretical or critical perspectives?** [Probe for rationale.]

59. **Suppose for a moment that literary criticism was a part of the curriculum in the school in which you are teaching. How would go about helping your students learn about these various critical perspectives? What would you do? What would they do?** [Probe for specifics here.]

60. **Again, let's say you were teaching in an inner-city high school where reading scores have been low for a number of years.** [Hand interviewee description of inner-city school: low reading scores, African-American students, impoverished families.] **Would you teach them about these various critical perspectives on literature even if they were not part of the curriculum?**

- [If yes:] **How would you approach teaching them in this context?** [Probe for rationale.]
- [If no:] **Let's say the department chair says you have to teach them. How would you approach doing so?** [Probe for rationale.]

61. **What about the rural high school described earlier?** [Hand interviewee description of rural high school: white students, low-income families, members of fundamentalist church.] **Would you teach them about these various critical perspectives on literature even if they were not part of the curriculum?**

- [If yes:] **How would you approach teaching them in this context?** [Probe for rationale.]
- [If no:] **Let's say the department chair says you have to teach them. How would you approach doing so?** [Probe for rationale.]

62. [If responses to #60 and #61 appear unproductive, say:] **Some people argue that high school curricula should be tailored to match different contexts. If you were teaching in this school** [description of inner city high school] **, and critical perspectives were not part of the curriculum, would you add it? What if you were teaching in this school?** [description of rural high school] [If yes:] **How would you approach teaching them?**

The Canon

63. **Are there particular texts that you think all high school students should read?**

[If yes:] **What are some of these? Why these?**

[If no:] **How would you go about deciding what your high school students will read?**

64. **Commentators see a decline in attention to reading as we become more dependent on media other than printed materials. As a teacher, is trying to reverse this trend part of your responsibility?**

[If yes:] **Do you have some ideas about how you would go about doing this?**

(If no:) How did you decide this?

65. Here is a list of books. Let's say that this is the recommended list of books for the school in which you are teaching. I'd like for you to take a minute and read the list over. To the right of each book title, check one of the boxes to show that

- you have read the book and would include it in your 11th grade curriculum
- you have read the book but would NOT include it in your 11th grade curriculum
- you haven't read the book but would include it in your 11th grade curriculum
- you haven't read the book and would NOT include it in your 11th grade curriculum

We are asking you whether you've read the book NOT to find out what you have and haven't read. We need to know whether or not you've read the book so we can understand how you go about deciding what books you think students ought to read.

After you have marked your choices, I'm going to ask you more about your thinking. Let me know when you're finished.

✓	Text	Author	Have read & WOULD include	Have read but WOULD NOT include	Haven't read but WOULD include	Haven't read & WOULD NOT include
	I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings	Angelou				
	The Fire Next Time	Baldwin				
	Forever	Blume				
	The Red Badge of Courage	Crane				
	Soul on Ice	Cleaver				
	Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass	Douglass				
	The Invisible Man	Ellison				
	The Great Gatsby	Fitzgerald				
	The Miracle Worker	Gibson				
	The Lord of the Flies	Golding				
	A Raisin in the Sun	Hansberry				
	The Scarlet Letter	Hawthorne				
	The Old Man and the Sea	Hemingway				
	Their Eyes Were Watching God	Hurston				
	Woman Warrior	Kingston				
	A Separate Peace	Knowles				
	To Kill a Mockingbird	Lee				
	Call of the Wild	London				
	Autobiography of Malcolm X	Haley/ Malcolm X				
	The Crucible	Miller				
	The Death of a Salesman	Miller				
	The Song of Solomon	Morrison				
	The Chosen	Potok				
	The Catcher in the Rye	Salinger				
	Hamlet	Shakespeare				
	Macbeth	Shakespeare				
	Grapes of Wrath	Steinbeck				
	Of Mice and Men	Steinbeck				
	Huckleberry Finn	Twain				
	The Color Purple	Walker				
	Ethan Frome	Wharton				
	Our Town	Wilder				
	Glass Menagerie	Williams				
	Black Boy	Wright				
	Native Son	Wright				

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[If the interviewee asks for more information about the school or the students, ask him/her how the information they are requesting matters. Then ask them about the kinds of students they plan to teach or the type of school in which they plan to teach. Tell them to respond with these students/this school in mind.]

66. **Teachers of course have to make choices because they can't teach everything they'd like to teach. Look at the books that you said you would include. Let's say your class of 11th graders only had time to read six of these during a year. Put a check mark in the box to the left of the six books you would choose for your 11th graders to read.**

67. **Now I'd like you to go through the six books you have chosen for your 11th grade English class and tell me why you included each.** [Probe to find out what criteria the interviewee used in selecting the text (readability, appeal to youth, expectations of society/family/colleges, etc.).]

68. **What about those books you have read but wouldn't include? Why have you rejected these?** [Probe to find out what criteria the interviewee used in rejecting the text (readability, appeal to youth, expectations of society/family/colleges, etc.).]

69. **Are there books not on this list that you would include among the six you would want your 11th graders to read?** [If yes, find out the book and then ask:] **And which of the six that you checked would you drop to make room for this one?**

70. **Here's a description of a particular school—we're calling it "School A."** [Give interviewee description of School A]. **Read the description and then tell me if your choice of books would be different if you were teaching in this school.**

School A

School A is located in an urban area where unemployment is high. About 55% of the students are African-American, another 25% are white, 15% are Latino, and 5% are Asian-American. A large proportion of these students come from impoverished families. Less that half the students have gone on to college in recent years. Many enter the military after graduation.

71. **And here's a description of a another school—"School B."** [Give interviewee description of School B]. **Read it and then tell me if your choice of books would be different if you were teaching in this school.**

School B

School B is located in a suburban community. Most of the adults are employed in plants or businesses located in or near their neighborhood. Few professionals live in the community and few residents have college degrees. Like graduates of School A, less than half of the students in School B go to college and a number opt for military service. The student population is almost totally white—roughly 95%.

72. **And finally, here's a description of School C** [Give interviewee description of School C]. **Read it and then tell me if your choice of books would be different if you were teaching in this school.**

School C

Like School B, this school is also located in a suburban area. The parents of many of the students are professionals and many people in the community have earned college degrees. The school population is about 80% white, 10% African-American, and 10% Asian-American. Each year, roughly 90% of the students go on to college.

73. **Here's the list of texts you chose in the first interview.** [Hand interviewee a copy of the list of texts s/he chose in the first interview.] **Could you take a look at these and compare them with the texts you chose this time?**

Evaluation

During this portion of the interview, be aware of differences in what interviewees think students should "know" and what they should "learn."

74. **Another task teachers face is finding out what their students have learned. Suppose that you are teaching *Romeo and Juliet* to a class of 9th graders. What are some of the reasons for teaching this play?**

75. **This may sound like a similar question but I'd like to know what you think 9th graders could learn from reading *Romeo and Juliet* ?**

76. **At what point in teaching the play do you think would be a good time to find out what they know or have learned about the play?**

77. **How would you go about finding out what they know or have learned?** [Probe to find out specifics. If they mention multiple choice, ask for an example. If they say they would have students write essays, ask them what they would ask the students to write essays about.]

78. **Let's say your 9th graders had finished reading the play. Here is a list of questions about *Romeo and Juliet*. Using the questions listed here, choose some questions that would provide you with information on what you think students ought to learn from studying *Romeo and Juliet*. Your students would have 55 minutes to answer the questions you chose.**

[Hand interviewee Questions on *Romeo and Juliet*.]

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Possible Test Questions on Romeo and Juliet

Item #1: Match these characters to their descriptions:

Romeo	killed Mercutio
Juliet	A Montague
Paris	Servant to Romeo
Benvolio	Victim of the Capulet-Montague war
Mercutio	Prince of Verona
Escalus	Romeo's friend
Tybalt	A Capulet
Balthasar	Man Juliet's father wishes her to marry

Item #2: Why did Romeo have to leave for Padua?

Item #3: Why didn't Juliet want to marry Paris?

Item#4: How old was was Juliet?

Item #5: Mercutio died angry with Romeo. Why?

Item #6: How might the Friar be held responsible for the tragic deaths of Romeo and Juliet?

Item #7: After Mercutio's death, Romeo says, "This day's black fate on mo days doth depend; This but begins the woe others must end." How does this foreshadow what follows?

Item #8 Who do you hold most responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, the Friar, the parents, or Romeo and Juliet themselves?

Item #9: Could the deaths of Romeo and/or Juliet have been prevented?

Item #10: Writing as if you were Friar Lawrence, describe the factors you considered as you attempted to act as both a friend to Romeo and Juliet and as a good priest.

Item #11: Are Romeo and Juliet like young people today? Defend your response.

Item #12: Did the Capulets and Montagues become friends after discovering their dead children? What makes you think so?

Item #13: Below are several quotations from the play. For each, name the speaker, describe what was going on in the story of the play at the time that the character made the statement and then explain what the lines mean from your point of view.

_____ That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

_____ Parting is such sweet sorrow that I shall say goodnight til it be morrow.

_____ 'Tis not so deep as a well nor so wide as a church door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve.

_____ O churl! Drunk all, and left no friendly drop to help me after? I will kiss thy lips. Haply some poison yet doth hang on them to make me die with a restorative.

_____ My only love, sprung from my only hate! Too early seen unknown, and known too late!

Item #14: What makes the nurse a humorous character?

Item #15: Some of the play is written in the ordinary language of Shakespeare's day, but some of it is written in rhymed couplets. Why might Shakespeare have used both styles in this play? What might have guided his choices about when to use couplets?

Item #16: What might Shakespeare have wanted to suggest by including the Queen Mab speech that Mercutio delivers in Act One?

Item #17: Name three ways that the theater of Shakespeare's time differs from theater in our day.

Item #18: If you saw the original scripts for Romeo and Juliet, would you expect to see stage directions? Why or why not?

Item #19: Was Juliet doing the right thing when she sneaked out and married Romeo? What would you have done in Juliet's place?

Item #20: Was the love between Juliet and Romeo "true love" or was it some adolescent infatuation? Explain how you decided.

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79. **Would you tell me which items you selected and why?**

80. **What would an incorrect answer to** [choose one of the items he student has selected] **tell you about the student who answered it?**

81. **What would an incorrect answer tell you about how to teach this play differently next time?**

82. **Would an incorrect answer suggest anything about the test question itself?**

83. **Let's look at another one. What would an incorrect answer to** [choose another of the items of a different type] **tell you about the student who answered it?** [Point out that different items may elicit different rationales.]

84. **What would an incorrect answer tell you about how to teach this play differently next time?**

85. **Would an incorrect answer suggest anything about the test question itself?**

86. **Let's look at item #3** [Why didn't Juliet want to marry Paris?] **If a student answered "Because she was in love with Romeo," would that be a correct answer? Remember, she was already married to Romeo. Share with me how you decided.** [Probe for other potentially correct answers.]

87. **Are there additional questions—or types of questions—you'd want to ask? Can you tell em about some of them?** [Wait.] **How are these questions different from the ones in this group? What makes them important to include?**

88. **Which of these questions can I ave wrong answers?** [If interviewee responds, almost none, ask:] **In what way is this a test or evaluation?**

(These lists of evaluation questions and the accompanying items [89—92] were part of the baseline interview but were dropped in the exit interview).

Now we'd like for you to make up a test on another book using some questions already developed. And we'd like to give you a choice of books. This is to increase the chance that you will be familiar with the book.

The choices are: *Julius Caesar* by Shakespeare, *The Scarlet Letter* by Hawthorne, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, or *Huckleberry Finn* by Twain. Which would you like to make up a test on?

[Hand the interviewee the questions on the book they chose.]

Test Questions on *The Scarlet Letter*

Select items from those below to make a 55-minute test on *The Scarlet Letter*. You may, of course, come up with your own questions that you think are better than those listed.

Item #1: Where did Hester face the townspeople on release from prison?

Item #2: How did Hester make a living?

Item #3: Why did Hester embroider the letter so beautifully?

Item #4: Why did Chillingworth book passage on the same ship as Hester and Dimmesdale?

Item #5: Why does Dimmesdale always have his hand over his heart?

Item #6: Were Hester and Dimmesdale in love? Support your answer.

Item #7: What kind of child was Pearl? Was she good, bad, or something else? Give examples to support your answer.

Item #8: Comment on the following statement: "The forest scene is the structural center of the book: everything leads either to or away from it."

Item #9: If you were Dimmesdale, would you have confessed? Why or why not?

Item #10: For what "sins" are people isolated today?

Item #11: Why did Hawthorne include the last chapter, "Conclusion?"

Item #12: Think about Hester's punishment and the treatment of witches during the same historical period. What are some similarities? Why do you think these similarities existed?

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Test Questions on *Julius Caesar*

Select items from those below to make a 55-minute test on *Julius Caesar*. You may, of course, come up with your own questions that you think are better than those listed.

Item #1: Match the following:

Brutus	One of Caesar's best friends
Portia	Leader of the conspirators
Lepidus	Nephew of Caesar, opposed the conspirators
Cassius	Wife of Brutus
Philippi	Where Brutus and Cassius are defeated
Anthony	Friend of Caesar who joins the conspirators
Octavius	One of the triumvirs, opposed the conspirators

Item #2: Match each of the following quotations with the character who said it (some names may be used more than once and others not at all):

- *Beware the ides of March.*
- *Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears;*
  I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
- *Et tu, Brute? — Then fall, Caesar!*
- *Farewell, good Strato. — Caesar, now be still:*
  I kill'd not thee with half so good a will.
- *Let me have men about me that are fat;*
  Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights:
  Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
  He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.

Characters: Caesar, Brutus, Anthony, Cassius, Soothsayer

Item #3: Why did the conspirators want to kill Caesar?

Item #4: Caesar's love and regard for Brutus is his undoing. What do you think about this judgement?

Item #5: Why do you think Caesar ignored the warnings that he received about his impending murder?

Item #6: Are political assassinations ever justified?

Item #7: How does Shakespeare get the audience to feel sympathy for Brutus? Why would he try to do this? Does he succeed?

Item #8: Compare Anthony and Brutus. What do these characters, as counterpoints, provide to the play?

Item #9: Why was political assassination a feature of political life in ancient Rome?

Item #10: For what kinds of reasons do people betray their friends? Do you think there is ever a "good reason" for such a betrayal?

Item #11: Whose your favorite character in the play? Why?

Item #12: How did the citizens of Rome react to the killing of Caesar?

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Test Questions on *Huckleberry Finn*

Select items from those below to make a 55-minute test on *Huckleberry Finn*. You may, of course, come up with your own questions that you think are better than those listed.

Item #1: List ten characters and briefly (in no more than five words) describe each. For example, "King—con-man" or "Buck—a Grangerford" would be sufficient. (Yes, you can use these two, so you only need eight more!)

Item #2: Why did Huck and Jim float past Cairo? Why did this cause Jim such sadness?

Item #3: How was Huck responsible for Buck's death?

Item #4: Huck's pa was critical of Huck for attending school. Explain how Huck agreed and/or disagreed with his father's views.

Item #5: When he boards the floating wreak of a steamboat, Huck overheers the thieves Jake Packard and Bill trying to decide whether to kill Jim Turner who was part of their gang. Did Huck act morally in response to the conversation he overheard?

Item #6: Dressed as a girl, Huck is admitted to a house by the woman of lives there. She sees through his disguise and somehow decides that he is a runaway apprentice. She says, "Bless you, child, I wouldn't tell on you." Was the woman right not to "tell on" Huck?

Item #7: Consider the following description:

"He was most fifty, and he looked it. His hair was long and tangled and greasy, and hung down, and you could see his eyes shining through like he was behind vines. It was all black, no gray; so was his long, mixed-up whiskers. There warn't no color in his face, where his face showed; it was white; not like another man's white, but a white to make a body's flesh crawl—a tree-toad white, a fish-belly white."

(1) What kind of character does this description suggest? Is this someone you'd care to know?

(2) Who is being described? And who is doing the describing? In other words, whose voice do you hear when you read this description?

(3) Consider the emphasis on the particular white—"a white to make a body's flesh crawl"... "a fish-belly white." What does this suggest to you?

Item #8: Discuss your reactions to this novel. Did you react in more than one way? That is, did you feel a part of the adventure? Did you plot and connive? Did you wrestle with moral issues? Discuss.

Item #9: The word "nigger" appears throughout the book. How did you feel reading this slur that was acceptable to many, probably most, of the people who lived along the Mississippi in the mid-19th century? How do you feel about requiring young people to read a book in which African Americans are referred to as "niggers?"

Item #10: The novel is set in the 1830's or 40's. Choose a social, political, or economic issue that was raised in the novel and that was also important in the United States during that period. Discuss the issue in its historical context. You do not need to refer to the novel in your discussion.

Item #11: What part does the tattoo on the chest of the dead and buried Mr. Wilks play in the unfolding of the action? (At least two functions of the tattoo would be nice, although one would be enough.)

Item #12: What parts do the king and the duke play in the story? Did Twain include them just because they are funny? Did he also have a serious purpose in mind?

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Test Questions on *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Select items from those below to make a 55-minute test on *To Kill a Mockingbird*. You may, of course, come up with your own questions that you think are better than those listed.

Item #1: Match these characters to their descriptions:

Mrs. Dubose	An old lady who lives down the street from the Finch's
Scout	alleged victim of rape
Jem	the Finch's maid
Arthur Radley	a Negro accused of rape
Atticus	owner of the town newspaper
Cal	friend of the Finch children
Tom Robinson	Scout's father, a lawyer
Mayella	the narrator/Jean Louise Finch
Bob Ewell	white trash father of Mayella
Dill	Scout's brother
B.B.Underwood	the town recluse

Item #2: Imagine yourself as an inhabitant of Maycomb. How would you have acted during the trial?

Item #3: Select one of the themes of the novel. Consider the time period in which it was set. How might the events differ if the action of the novel were set in the context of 1992 rather than the 1930s?

Item #4: Why is the book titled "To Kill a Mockingbird?"

Item #5: Why did the author choose a young girl to be the narrator?

Item #6: Below are quotations from the novel. For each, describe the context in which the speaker made the statement and then present your interpretation of the lines.

Atticus:"Shoot all the bluejays you want if can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mocking-bird."

Mrs. Merriweather: "I tell you there are some good but misguided people in this town. . . . Now far be it from me to say who, but some of 'em in this town thought they were doing the right thing a while back, but all they did was stir 'em up. . . . I tell you if my Sophy'd kept it up another day I'd have let her go. It's never entered that wool of hers that the only reason I keep her is because the depression's on and she needs her dollar and a quarter every week she can get it."

Item #7: Would the citizens of Maycomb re-elect Atticus to the legislature after he defended Tom? Support your answer.

Item #8: Who was responsible for Tom's death?

Item #9: Who saves the Finch children's lives?

Item #10: Compare the treatment of women and African Americans in Maycomb in the 1930s with their treatment today. What has changed and what has not? What has caused the changes you identify? What has prevented more changes in the treatment of women and African Americans?

Item #11: What was the name of the town in which the story takes place?

Item #12: How does the trial affect Jem and Scout?

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89. [When they are finished, ask:] **Would you tell me which items you selected and why?**

90. **What would an incorrect answer to** [choose one of the items he student has selected] **tell you about the student who answered it?**

What would an incorrect answer tell you about how to teach this play differently next time?

Would an incorrect answer suggest anything about the test question itself?

91. **Let's look at another one. What would an incorrect answer to** [choose another of the items of a different type] **tell you about the student who answered it?**

What would an incorrect answer tell you about how to teach this play differently next time?

Would an incorrect answer suggest anything about the test question itself?

92. **Are there additional questions—or types of questions—you'd want to ask? Can you tell me about some of them?** [Wait.] **How are these questions different from the ones in this group? What makes them important to include?**

Strategies For Teaching

93. **Let's say a teacher has already selected a text. What are the ways in which the teacher—not necessarily you—is likely to teach this text?** (Interviewer keeps the list as interviewee talks.) Additional probes:

- **What are some strategies?**
- **What are some approaches?**

94 **This is the list you just created as you talked. What do you think are the reasons why teachers tend to do these things?** Probe:

- Could you talk some about the reasons teachers might have for using each of these particular strategies/approaches?

95. **There are lots of ways of working with literature that many English teachers do seem to use in high school classrooms. Here is a list of strategies we thought of—you'll notice that some of them you named as well.** (Give them the Strategies sheet and time to look it over. If interviewee mentions a specific strategy not included, ask: **Where did this idea come from?**)

STRATEGIES LITERATURE TEACHERS USE

Teaching Vocabulary—
teacher selects words
look up definitions & write sample sentences
a test at the end of the week
vocabulary workbooks

Other Classroom Tasks
Writing:
Character sketches
Imitating an author's style
Personal version of the ends of stories
To imitate a genre
Answering questions in an anthology
Something from a character's point of view
Tests:
Quizzes
Essay exams
Spelling tests
Reading aloud
Activities:
Book reports—oral or written
Memorization of a poem, authors of texts, dates of authors' births or deaths
Keeping a journal
Acting out a scene from a play or novel
Students read own writing aloud to class
Reading outside of class
Library research about an author or time period
Oral presentations
Make a literary time line
Dress up as a character or author
Guest speakers
Ask students to work in small groups on questions
Making a collage
Field trips

Using Media:
Watch a video students
Watch a film strip

Teacher Input:
Review plot of story
Lecture

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- **Are there any specific strategies you predict you would want to avoid in your teaching? Explain some of your thinking about that decision.**

- **Are there any you think you would prefer using in your teaching? Explain some of your thinking about that decision.**

- **Are there any that you predict you'll have to use whether you really like the strategy or not—any that are just part of teaching literature no matter what? How did you decide about that?**

96. **Actually, we weren't sure about whether vocabulary belongs here. Is teaching vocabulary part of teaching literature? How does it fit in?**

Or: **What would you do about words in the text that students might not understand, or is this even a problem?**

97. **I'd like you to look at a few scenarios describing some imaginary literature teachers' choices of strategies. After you read each of the scenarios, I'd like you to talk a little about what might be some reasons behind that teacher's choices. Here's the first one.** [Hand interviewee Scenario One.]

Scenario One

Ms Maxwell's 12th grade class is beginning a new play. There are enough copies for everyone. She has set aside one week for students to use to read the play, analyze it and do research about the time period in which the play is set. She plans for students to work in small groups all week as they read, analyze and research. Ms Maxwell has already selected the research resources from the school library and moved these into her room. Early in the week, she plans to give a lively 15-minute lecture about the personal details of the author's life—she knows many humorous stories of the author's home life and childhood. She will also talk about how the critics of his time rejected his work and how that rejection affected his emotional life and influenced the kinds of characters he created. Students will take notes. She also plans to spend some time discussing the plot of the play with the whole class. By the end of the week, students will present a scene from the play dressed in appropriate costumes. Since the school has a video version of this play, Ms. Maxwell plans to show it the following week. Afterward, the class will discuss differences between the video, the script and their own scenes. She will conclude the study of this play by giving students a two-part test. One part will be an exam in class with some objective plot questions and many short answer questions about the play's themes, symbols, the author and the period. The second part will be done outside of class. Students will write a new last act imitating the style of the author.

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- **What might be the reasons this teacher has behind her choices for teaching in this case?** Probe for rationales.

[Hand interviewee Scenario Two]

Scenario Two

Mr. Allen teaches a rather lengthy poetry unit as part of his 10th grade literature course. Usually, he reads each new poem aloud himself--dramatically--while students follow along in their own copies. Sometimes he asks for students to read aloud. Either way, he follows the oral reading with a study sheet he wrote himself. The study sheet identifies particular words from the poems to be defined as well as allusions and metaphors which must be explained. It also poses questions about the author's meaning in various parts of each poem. Mr. Allen tries to include several poems that will be interesting to students.

While students work, Mr. Allen walks around the room and talks with them about what they are doing. Near the end of the period, Mr. Allen goes over the study sheet. Sometimes, he answers a question himself. Sometimes he calls on a student for the answer. At the end of the unit, students will take a final, comprehensive exam drawing mostly from the study sheet questions. Students who write and read aloud an original poem modeled after one the whole class studied receive bonus points.

- **What might be the reasons this teacher has behind his choices for teaching in this case?** Probe for rationales, e.g.: **Why do you think he...?**
- Use the line: **Mr. Allen tries to include several poems that will be interesting to students** to probe for interviewee's notions about what interests students.

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[Hand interviewee the beginning set-up of Scenario Three. Then, present solution A.]

Scenario Three

Ms. Cassidy is a new teacher working with an 11th grade English class. They are reading collections of short stories. Ms Cassidy has noticed that while most students say that they read the assignment, only a few students are able to answer the questions she asks. Students groan when she assigns a new story. They write only a few sentences in their reaction journals. One student even said, "Ms Cassidy, I don't get why we're doing all these stories. They're stupid. When are we going to do something else?"

Solution A

So, Ms Cassidy decided to try a different teaching strategy. The next day, she began the period by asking, "Can you remember a time when you felt very nervous? What kinds of things make you--or other people--nervous?" She listened carefully to students' responses and asked additional questions to clarify what students were saying. She wrote key words and phrases on the board. Next, she asked students to look at the title of the story they were about to read and predict how the story might relate to the experiences they had just recalled. Students offered a variety of possibilities. Finally, just before asking students to begin to read silently, Ms Cassidy wrote three guiding questions on the board. She suggested that students look for the answers to these questions as they read the first 3 pages of the story. She stopped students after about 10 minutes and asked for answers to the three guiding questions. Then, she showed them two new questions to guide their reading for the rest of the story.

- **Would this strategy be a good way to respond to the situation in scenario three?**
- **Can you explain what might lead a teacher to respond this way?**
- **Do you think it will help? Explain what makes you think that.**

[Next, present solution B.]

Solution B

So, Ms Cassidy decided to try something different. Instead of asking students to read the next story silently as she had planned, she found a video version of it. She showed the video and gave students a quiz over it. Meanwhile, she located classroom sets of two short, paperback novels she will read with students. Neither is very dificult in terms of vocabulary. Both depict adolescent characters dealing with contemporary problems. She plans to let students decide whether to read the novels in class silently or together aloud. As a final reading project, she has decided to let students select any Stephen King novel they want to read. The whole class need not select the same novel; it can be an individual choice. She plans to ask students to report orally on the novel they select. If 2 or more students wind up reading the same book, she will let them work together on their oral presentation.

- **Would this strategy be a good way to respond to the situation in scenario three?**
- **Can you explain what might lead a teacher to respond this way?**
- **Do you think it will help? Explain what makes you think that.**
- Probe: **Which solution do you value? What would you do if it were your class?**

98. **We've been talking about a lot of strategies. Look again at the list we wrote, the list you thought of, and these scenarios.**

- **Which of these strategies characterizes what is most typical of high school literature teaching?**
- **How do you think that happens—why is it that these particular strategies are so typical?**
- **How will you protect yourself from this?**

99. **One last question about strategies—are there any ways of working with literature and high school students that you've encountered or imagined that are not typical but that seem valuable to you?** (Probe for details and rationales.)

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Exit Interview Only

Part IV: Course Information

100. **So tell me about your literature courses this semester.**

For each literature course:

- Get the course title, number & instructor
- Get a list of the literary works they read
- Ask them about what they feel they got out of the course
- Ask them about how the course was conducted—how was it organized and taught, who talked, what kinds of questions were asked, what kinds of assignments did they do, what kinds of exams
- Ask about particularly positive moments
- Ask about particularly negative moments

101. **When you think back to all of the English and Literature courses you've taken at the university, which was the best?**

What made it so good? [If the student has already described the course above, don't ask him/her to repeat. If not, probe for details of how the course was taught.]

102. **What about the flip side—What's the worst English or literature course you've taken?**

What made it bad? [If the student has already described the course above, don't ask him/her to repeat. If not, probe for details of how the course was taught.]

103. **What about education courses?**

- Get the course title, number & instructor
- What kinds of things did you read?
- Ask them about what they feel they got out of the course
- Ask them about how the course was conducted—how was it organized and taught, who talked, what kinds of questions were asked, what kinds of assignments did they do, what kinds of exams
- Ask about particularly positive moments
- Ask about particularly negative moments

104. **What about field experiences?**

105. **And have you may any discoveries about teaching?**

106. **Is there anything else you've done this term that has pushed your thinking or ideas about literature and reading?**

107. **Is there anything you've done or experienced this semester that has given you insights into yourself?**

108. **What about next semester? Are you taking any courses?**

Exit Interview Only

Part V: Individualized Questions

NOTE: These are the questions we developed for Esther. Although these are questions that we may want to ask all our interviewees, for each individual you interview, you will need to develop similarly tailored questions. The basis for these questions are the interviewee's responses to earlier interview questions. Be sure to read through the transcript of the interviewee's first interview.

1. **Is it important to make sure your students know where you stand through the texts you select for instruction?**

   - **Is that different from withholding texts because you don't agree with their content?**

   - **Some people would say that's censorship. How would you respond to that claim?**

2. **Let's look at this list of texts again. Imagine that your child is 17 years old and a junior in high school. Which texts would you select for him or her to read?**

   - **What would you hope that your child would get out of reading these texts?**

3. **What is your goal, or primary purpose, in being a teacher of literature?**

   - **Do you have other goals, too, that may not be your primary focus?**

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